NEWS / A4
Money flowed in Congress to OK Pagcor bid

WORLD / A26
Paris Hilton begins 3-week jail term for violating probation

ENTERTAINMENT / F1
Johnny Depp, 'Pirates' win popcorn prize at MTV Movie Awards

NEWS / A20
Manila Mayor-elect Alfredo Lim reopens Arroceros Park to public

NEWS / A9
Japan agency ups RP credit rating from 'stable' to 'positive'

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS NEWS
Wednesday, June 6, 2007 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 178 P18 Website: www.inquirer.net

Pichay bows out; vows to bounce back in 2010

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SENATORIAL CAMpaign might have cost him a king's ransom but Prospero "Butch" Pichay, the 2007 elections' top spender, be-

PICHAY/ A21

GMA in Fatima thanks Our Lady for Mike A cure

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

LISBON (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo yesterday became the first Philippine leader to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, lighting a candle and praying at the site where 90 years ago the Virgin Mary appeared before three children.

GMA/ A21

Spy chief snubs Jonas hearing

Missing activist, media icon shared passion for farming

By Fe Zamora

THE MISSING FARMER-ACTIVIST Jonas Joseph Burgos enjoyed the respect of the person he admired most—his father, the late press freedom icon Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr.

The mutual admiration dated back to the 1970s when Joe Burgos was a struggling publisher of the hard-hitting tabloid We Forum and Jonas was one of its "newsboys," his mother, Edita, told the INQUIRER.

"Joe was not only proud of Jonas' work as an agriculturist; he also respected his son," she said.

By Edita's account, Jonas had been

MISSING/ A10

Isafp chief no-show again in CHR probe

By Volt Contreras

NOT ONLY WAS THE CHIEF OF THE INTELLIGENCE SERvice of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) a no-show for the second time at the Commission on Human Rights' public inquiry yesterday into Jonas Burgos' disappearance, his lawyer also refused to take part in the hearing.

CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing chided Maj. Ser-me Ayuyao, who was representing Isafp chief Maj. Gen. Delfin Bangit, when the lawyer questioned the legality of the proceedings.

"We will note that you have a certain predilection to be uncooperative," an apparently annoyed Quisumbing told Ayuyao after he declined to take the "witness stand."

Ayuyao, who heads Isafp legal affairs, answered in the affirmative when asked by Quisumbing if he was "objecting" to the proceedings.

He argued that the hearing was tanta-

SPY CHIEF/ A10

PRESIDENT ARROYO MAKES HISTORY as the first Filipino leader to make a pilgrimage to Fatima, Portugal. She poses in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of Fatima where she was given a tour of the apparition site. AP

DANCES WITH TREES: Professor Grace Odal-Devora of the University of the Philippines celebrates World Environment Day at the Angud (end part of logs) art installation at the Cultural Center's front lawn. The celebration coincides with the launch of the "Tree for Life: 20M Seedlings for Planting," a project that aims to surpass last year's Green Philippine Highway's planting of 800,000 trees.

Volunteers to plant 20-M trees

By TJ Burgonio and Tina G. Santos

"ONE SCHOOL DAY, OUR TEACHER asked us to draw a picture of the environment. I drew the sky and colored it gray. Then I drew an ocean and two mountains, and colored them brown," thus began young student Zia Mikaela de Leon's tale.

"Then, my teacher said, 'The sky should be light blue, the sea should be navy blue, and the mountains should be green because there are forests. She also asked, 'What are those things floating on the water? They do not look like fish.'"

The grade-schooler said she politely told her teacher: "That's how the Earth looked like when you were young. But today, there are few trees on the dry mountains. The air is filled with smoke and dust. Garbage swim in the oceans instead of fish."

But, she said, thanks to the proponents of the "Trees for Life" project, Filipinos "may have a beautiful world to enjoy in the future."

De Leon related her tale at yesterday's launch of the joint project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Green Army Foun-

VOLUNTEERS/ A20

FIXING EDUCATION FLAWS

New subsidy plan perils rural private high schools

By Fernando del Mundo

(Last of three parts)

OFFICIALS OF PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS in the provinces fear their days are numbered.

Concern centers on a government move to phase out the Educational Service Contracting (ESC) program hammered out with private high schools in the 1980s to help poor elementary graduates.

The ESC will then be replaced by the Educational Voucher System (EVS), if the Department of Education overcomes objections by private schools mainly run by the Catholic Church and religious groups.

Tested last year, the EVS will politicize the program and further erode the already dismal situation in Philippine education, critics say.

The ESC and EVS differ in the selection of schools and student recipients. In effect, the EVS will do away with the screening mechanism in place for almost a quarter of a century and lead to the demise of the so-called "nonelite" private high schools.

In a full-page newspaper ad taken out last month, the Davao Association of Colleges and Schools and the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations in Region 11 (Southern Mindanao) appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to retain the ESC guidelines for the beneficiaries coming from 430,000 families nationwide.

The EVS conditions "do not only dis-

NEW/ A20

5-TEAM *Report*

Group to tap people power to push reforms

By Tarra Quismundo

FRUSTRATED BY UNFULFILLED promises of education reforms, an organization born out of the "Hello Garci" turbulence two years ago is aiming to harness people power to fix schools, train teachers and help the Filipino student learn more.

The International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov) is seeking to catalyze a proeducation constituency that will maximize democracy in revitalizing the education system.

Conceived as a lobby and voting bloc, the nongovernment organization composed of former government officials and academics is envisioned to pressure the Arroyo administration to pursue reforms, support and install leaders committed to the process and make them accountable.

"You use certain issues, identify certain goals, but you build a certain constituency around the reform that says we'

GROUP/ A20

Roxas warns: JPEPA safety nets needed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THOUSANDS OF FILIPINO WORKERS IN FACtories making garments and electric appliances, and assembling automobiles stand to lose their jobs if the government implements an economic deal with Japan without putting safety nets in place.

Sen. Manuel A. Roxas II issued the warning after President Macapagal-Arroyo pressed on

ROXAS WARNS/ A10

15 Liberals back Garcia bid for speakership

By Norman Bordadora and Christian V. Esguerra

CEBU'S CONGRESSMAN-ELECT Pablo Garcia has secured the support of a bloc of 15 Liberal Party lawmakers in his bid to topple Speaker Jose de Venecia, a ranking LP member told the INQUIRER.

Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III said the 15 LP representatives elected to the incoming 14th Congress would present a common front when the speakership issue came to a vote.

"We are going to vote this week to put a decision on the matter. We have already decided that we will vote as one. My reading of the numbers is that we are inclined to support Garcia," Tañada said in an interview the other day.

"Garcia is more acceptable. For instance, on the issue of Cha-cha, he believes that if ever there will be Charter change, it should be through a constitutional convention," added Tañada, a member of the national executive council of the mainstream LP under the leadership of Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Tañada said the LP had adopted the same position on Cha-cha.

Earlier, Drilon declared his support for Garcia, saying in Cebu City that he admired Garcia's independent stance on several issues, even if he was an Arroyo ally.

One of those issues, Drilon said, was the administration move last year to change the Constitution through people's initiative—which Garcia opposed.

This is why he believes Garcia will not be a puppet of the administration, Drilon said.

He said the LP's House contingent

15 LIBERALS/ A21

SPEAK EASY

DE VENECIA: Scores coup but not GMA nod.

INQUIRER PHOTO

GARCIA: Chamber, not Charter, change.

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

DAR chief calls in Negros troops

By TJ Burgonio

AGRARIAN REFORM secretary Nasser Pangandaman yesterday condemned the killing of two land reform beneficiaries and the wounding of six other farmers in a sugar plantation in Negros Occidental and asked police and military authorities to send more troops to the contested Hacienda Velez-Malaga.

MAPALAD FARMERS display photos of the attack which killed two farmer beneficiaries of Hacienda Velez-Malaga. JOAN BONDOC

In a strongly worded statement, Pangandaman said the farmers had every right to enter the property since it was already awarded to them. He ordered the Department of Agrarian Reform's legal office to assist the families of the victims in the filing of charges and to "do its best to bring all the perpetrators to justice."

The two farmers gunned down by security guards of the hacienda were among 57 of over 100 beneficiaries of a land grant under the government's agrarian reform program who Pangandaman had personally installed last March, two months after they staged a hunger strike in front of his office.

Pangandaman also warned that "heads would roll" in the provincial DAR office if he found that they had delayed the survey he ordered to determine the boundary of the land granted to the farmer-beneficiaries.

'Cold-blooded murder'

Although police officials said they were readying homicide charges against the hacienda guards, Pangandaman described the killing as "cold-blooded murder."

"Enough is enough," Pangandaman stated, warning that the government "would not allow anybody to scuttle the gains of land reform."

The farmers organization Task Force Mapalad (TFM), however, blamed the violence on the government itself, including the DAR.

The TFM, to which the Hacienda Velez-Malaga beneficiaries belong, has alleged that President Arroyo's brother-in-law, Negros Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo has been using his influence with Malacañang to scuttle the installation of the farmers in the plantation because of his supposedly close ties with hacienda owner Robert Cuenca.

The family of one of the slain farmers yesterday issued an appeal directly to President Macapagal-Arroyo to step into the dispute and put an end to their woes.

"Whoever did this should be put behind bars," said Clarita Garcesa, 67, widow of slain Alejandro Garcesa in a briefing at the Sulo Hotel in Quezon City.

"President Macapagal-Arroyo should put an end to the suffering of the farmers of Hacienda Velez-Malaga," said Mary Ann Garcesa, daughter of one of the slain farmers, Alejandro Garcesa, 70.

DAR's 'incompetence'

Florenda Hilario, sister-in-law of slain farmer Ely Tupas, 52, appealed to the President to replace Pangandaman "with somebody who can implement agrarian reform not only in Negros Occidental, but in the rest of the country."

"Agrarian reform isn't happening because of DAR's incompetence, and its fear of Cuenca," she said in the same briefing.

Eledelyn Paclibar, 55, said on the verge of tears: "We will die defending our right to our land."

The farmer beneficiaries said they decided to occupy the 5-ha part of the 56 hectares last Monday after the DAR regional officials kept postponing the conduct of the survey segregation.

They said they sought permission from the Police Regional Mobile Group to enter the property, but were told to wait outside for the DAR decision. They decided to enter it just the same.

At odds

It was only after several shots were fired when the policemen stepped in, they claimed.

Three of the guards have been picked up. Two others remained at large, according to them.

Roger Miravalles, spokesperson of the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers Union—rival of the TFM farmers—said their group had nothing to do with the shooting. The union is at odds with the TFM because they feel that DAR gave the prime lots to the TFM to the disadvantage of their union members.

Miravalles said the entry of the farmers into the five-hectare area should not be allowed since there is a pending complaint for contempt before the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the situation remains tense. The TFM farmers have set up a tent in the middle of the field where they intend to hold the wake for their dead. *With reports from Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas and AFP*

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Gonzalez dares Beltran: Sue me

By Leila B. Salaverria

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ will not stand in the way of Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran who plans to sue those who prosecuted him for rebellion and were rebuked by the Supreme Court.

Last Friday, the high tribunal ordered the dismissal of the rebellion case against Beltran because of insufficient evidence.

Gonzalez said he was not bothered with Beltran's claims because they were irrelevant.

He also said that media tended to magnify stories about Beltran to make him appear bigger than he really is.

"You just want to magnify this kind of story. You want to make Mr. Beltran feel big, like a giant, when he is a pygmy," Gonzalez told reporters yesterday.

He added that the militant lawmaker's case would allow the government to earn money through the filing fee.

Beltran said that he would sue government prosecutors for damages, amounting to P1 million for each of the 15 months he was illegally detained.

Beltran was arrested shortly after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of emergency last year. He and the others were tagged as "leaders and promoters" of an alleged plot to overthrow the Arroyo administration, supposedly with the connivance of communist rebels and military extremists.

But the Supreme Court ordered the dismissal of Beltran's rebellion case, saying the evidence failed to show there was enough cause to charge him with taking part in an armed public uprising.

The high tribunal said none of the affidavits showed that Beltran led a rebellion or that he committed specific acts promoting, maintaining or heading a rebellion.

It also said the prosecutors were wrong in subjecting Beltran to a second inquest for rebellion because none of the arresting officers saw him commit rebellion or had any knowledge of the facts that he just committed rebellion.

Taysan suspects seek transfer

By Leila B. Salaverria

SAYING THEY WOULD NOT GET A FAIR treatment at the Batangas prosecutor's office, two policemen tagged as allegedly responsible for the burning of a school in Taysan, Batangas, during the May 14 elections have asked for the transfer of the case's preliminary investigation to the Department of Justice.

But Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he was still studying the case and did not see the necessity of a transfer at this time.

In a letter to Gonzalez, lawyer Romeo Esmero said his clients, police officers Roberto Marinda and William Relos Jr. were being framed for the March 15 torching of the Pinagbayanan Elementary School building that has since been renamed after one of the victims, school teacher Nellie Banaag.

Poll watchers Leticia Ramos and Guillermo Malaluan also died from the fire when a group of masked men invaded the school during the canvassing of votes a day after the elections, threw gasoline on some ballot boxes and set fire to them.

Marinda and Relos are facing possible charges of arson with multiple homicide and serious physical injuries.

According to Esmero, the prosecutor handling the case, Maria Antonette A. Capuno Lupac, was a relative of Supt. Elwin Fernandez who had allegedly forced a witness, Cesar Suyom, to point to Marinda as being responsible for the burning of the school.

He also said there was a threat to the life and security of Marinda and Relos, claiming to have received intelligence reports that there was a plan to liquidate them when they attend the hearings.

He said the plan was "a conspiracy with the criminals with whom the PNP-Regional Special Operations Group in Region IV have arrested and prosecuted."

Esmero also said the burning of the school building could be politically motivated because a witness, in his sworn statements before the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, said he saw the arsonists alighting from vehicles belonging to Taysan Mayor-elect Victor Portugal.

Aside from Marinda and Relos, six John Does are also facing charges in connection with the burning of the Taysan school building.

Two other policemen have been placed under restrictive custody and are being investigated for possible administrative charges—Taysan municipal police commander Chief Insp., Elpidio Ramirez and his deputy, Insp. Ruel de la Cruz.

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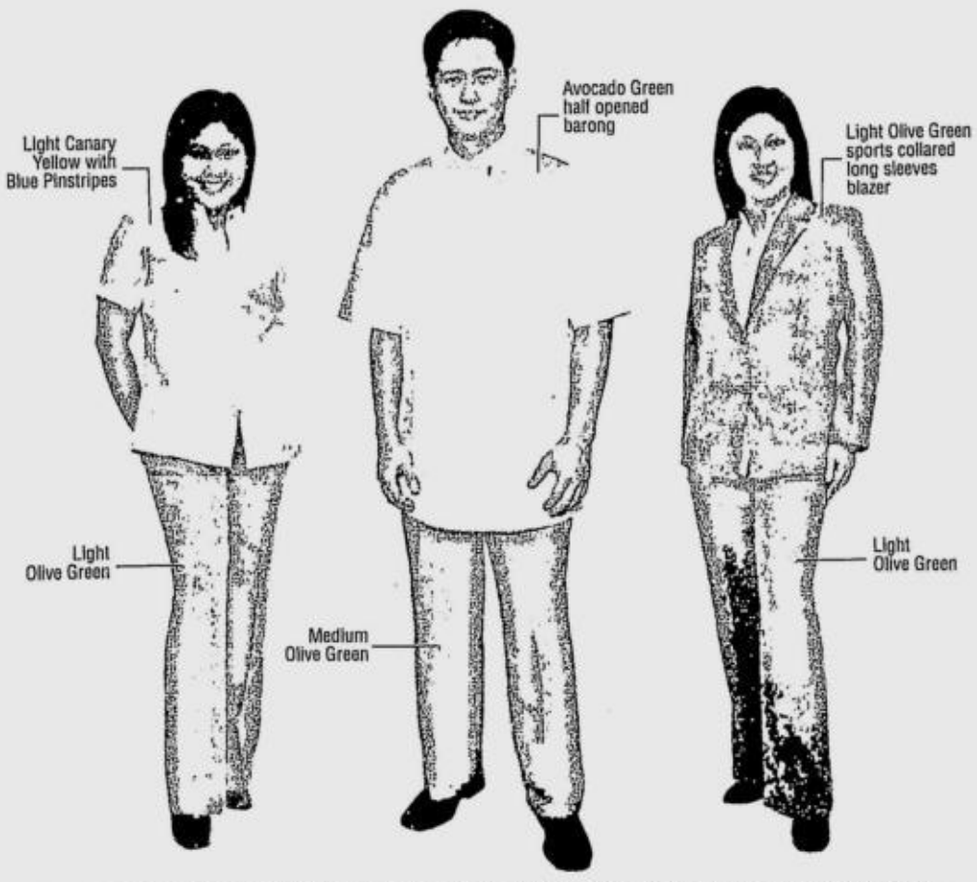

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Corrections

IN THE JUNE 2 ISSUE, a story on Page A5—"Padded votes for 6 party-lists"—misspelled the first name of the secretary general of party-list group Bayan Muna. The Bayan Muna secretary general's name is Nathanael—not Nathaniel—Santiago.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 3 ISSUE, the caption of a photo accompanying a Global Pinoy story on Page A22—"Filipino lawyer in LA misses action-packed stint at NBI"—misspelled the surname of a Filipino lawyer based in Los Angeles, California. The lawyer's name is Morel Callueng—not Calueng.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 4 ISSUE, an article on Page A21—"Comelec urged to probe poll regional chief"—misspelled the surname of the president of the party-list group Akbayan. The Akbayan president's name is Ronald Llamas—not Llanes.

JOINT STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

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Money flowed in rush to approve franchise of Pagcor, solon claims

By Christian V. Esguerra

LOBBY MONEY FLOWED INTO BOTH chambers of Congress paving the way for the controversial extension of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation's franchise for another 25 years, an opposition lawmaker alleged yesterday.

One senator received a whopping $2 million in exchange for withdrawing his opposition to the franchise extension, Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico charged during the plenary session of the lower house.

"I understand a senator received $2 million in order to remove his objection," he said, repeating the same accusation in an interview with the INQUIRER minutes later.

Edward "Dodie" King, Pagcor director for corporate communications, denied the allegations. "All our funds are checked by the Commission on Audit. So how can we give out $2 million? It's far-fetched," King said. Suplico is underestimating the wisdom of his fellow congressmen, he added.

Asked if he had any evidence, Suplico said the matter was "no secret" among his colleagues, including senators, even before the two chambers ended their two-day special session last February.

The lawmaker also told the floor that money from Pagcor was allegedly used to fund the candidacy of Pagcor chair Efraim Genuino's son in Makati.

'Heard from the ground'

Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. said this information could be "heard from the ground" to the tune of P120 to P320 million.

"Lobby money flowed into the House, into Congress," Suplico told the INQUIRER.

The lawmaker raised the matter of lobby money in an attempt to convince the body to act on his pending motion questioning the quorum during the session on June 4 that approved the transmission of House Bill 3409 which granted the extented Pagcor franchise.

"Why the rush? Why the rush when I have a pending, unresolved motion based on a constitutional requirement which the House violated?" he asked.

Suplico noted that only 40 lawmakers voted in favor of HB 3409 during the special session in February. Sixteen others voted against it.

With only 56 congressmen present at the plenary session hall, the number clearly didn't constitute a majority of the House as required by law, he said.

"An act obnoxious to the Constitution is an act not existent at all," he told the body.

'Overtaken by time'

Majority Leader Arthur Defensor replied, saying the matter had already been "overtaken by time" and, as a result, the chamber had already lost jurisdiction over it.

Locsin suggested that the House be divided to determine if the bill had been passed or not. Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar said the suggestion was not needed, but said the issue would be discussed "more thoroughly" during session this afternoon.

Gambling theme park

Later, Suplico told the INQUIRER that his fellow lawmakers rushed HB 3409 because of the planned construction of a $20-billion gambling theme park at the reclamation area in Pasay.

The franchise of the state-run gambling agency was set to expire in June next year.

The bill was rushed "because the investor would not put in his money if the franchise ended next year," Suplico said. "He wanted the franchise extended so he'd get back the money he invested."

Senate OKs new charter to give UP more autonomy

By Dona Pazzibugan

A NEW CHARTER THAT GRANTS GREATER institutional and fiscal autonomy to the University of the Philippines, the country's premier university, was ratified by the Senate yesterday, a day before it adjourns sine die (indefinitely).

A bicameral conference committee late Monday finished reconciling the House and Senate versions of the UP Charter Bill.

The bicameral conference report has to be ratified by the House of Representatives before the bill can be submitted to Malacañang for signing.

Small budget

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, principal author of the Senate version, said the new UP charter would avert the decline in the competitiveness of the UP and the exodus of its top professors to private schools.

"Many of the problems of UP are borne out of a small budget to reform and improve many of its services. With the ratification of the UP Charter Act, the university will finally be able to generate income through the use of its resources and assets which could be used to improve its curricula and salary system," said Pangilinan.

Pangilinan is a former chair of the UP University Student Council and in 1988 sat as a student representative on the UP Board of Regents, the university's highest policy-making body.

Among other things, the UP Charter Act will allow the exemption of the UP from the Salary Standardization Act which will enable it to increase the salaries of its teaching and nonteaching staff; tax exemptions of donations and revenues used solely for educational purposes; and greater autonomy by removing Malacañang's power to appoint the UP president and other sectoral representatives.

Safeguards

It also provides safeguards in the utilization and disposition of UP land and other assets such as the creation of an independent trust committee that would advise the board of regents on such investments.

Under the new Charter, the regents can approve and enter into contracts like joint ventures, long-term leases and sale for the university to be able to raise revenues.

Contracts worth above P50 million would require the vote of two-thirds of the board. Other contracts worth P50 million and less will require only a majority vote.

11 members

The UP Board of Regents has 11 members: The Commission on Higher Education who chairs the board; the UP president as vice chair; the chair of the Senate committee on education, arts and culture; the chair of the House committee on higher and technical education; the UP Alumni Association president; a faculty regent; a student regent; a staff regent; and three sectoral regents.

"After almost 12 years in the legislative mill, we are glad that this landmark piece of legislation will finally become a law," said Pangilinan, who has been promoting the bill since 2001.

Threat of hospital 'holiday' lingers

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS WILL PUSH THROUGH with their "hospital holiday" on June 22 to 23 if talks with health authorities over unpaid hospital bills bog down.

The Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines earlier threatened to declare a "hospital holiday" to protest a law barring hospitals from detaining patients with unpaid bills.

The PHAP will ask the government that they be allowed to honor only promissory notes from government agencies.

Guidelines

"The implementing guidelines of the law should guarantee us (private hospitals) that promissory notes would be fully paid," PHAP spokesperson Rustico Jimenez told the INQUIRER.

PHAP will meet today with Health Secretary Francisco Duque III to talk about the issue. It was the DOH which initiated the dialogue in an attempt to thwart the planned "hospital holiday."

"We will have to look into the merits of their proposal. I cannot say much yet (because) I have not yet seen the particulars of the subject proposal," Duque also said yesterday.

Proceed

The DOH is crafting the implementing rules and regulations of the law.

But if the talks bog down today, Jimenez said they would proceed with the two-day "hospital holiday" on June 22 and 23.

Jimenez said they would not accept patients during those days, except for emergency and intensive care unit patients.

He said PHAP would also continue holding twice a month hospital holidays.

The PHAP, composed of about 300 active private hospitals, is protesting Republic Act No. 9439, which bans officers of medical institutions from preventing patients from leaving the hospital or refusing them medical certificates over unpaid bills as long as the patients issue a promissory note to pay.

Gringo not on speaking terms with Erap

FORMER SENATOR GREGORIO Honasan, who was reelected to the Senate despite his rebellion case, admitted yesterday that he was no longer on speaking terms with former ally, deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Honasan said he was not included in the informal talks held by opposition senators at Estrada's rest house in Tanay, Rizal, Sunday, to discuss the next Senate leadership.

"I'm not aware (of that meeting). I'm not invited so that's not my concern," he said in a phone interview with reporters yesterday.

When asked about his relationship with Estrada, Honasan replied: "I don't know. We've not been in communication."

Honasan was not included in the Genuine Opposition senatorial ticket that Estrada put together for the May 14 elections.

Detained at the time for his alleged involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, Honasan went on to run for the Senate as an independent.

In 10th place, Honasan would be among the winners expected to be proclaimed tonight by the Commission on Elections.

Honasan's *mistah* (classmate) in the Philipine Military Academy Class 1971, Sen. Panfilo Lacson had said opposition senators have started discussing the possibility of forming a new majority bloc to wrest control of the Senate in the 14th Congress.

Lacson was reelected under the GO ticket.

Honasan and Lacson had a get-together with some of their PMA classmates at a coffee shop at the Edsa Shangri-la Mall in Mandaluyong City yesterday morning.

"We were just talking about the Senate, how things will unfold. It was a purely social meeting," Honasan said.

He sidestepped questions if he would join the emerging opposition bloc in the Senate.

"I'll have to find out first what the vision of this new majority bloc is. If it's consistent with my principles then I'd probably be willing to join. But I'll have to find out from them," Honasan said.

He also played coy when asked if he would turn pro-administration.

But he echoed Malacañang's sentiments for lesser Senate investigations "in aid of legislation."

"*Yung iba kailangan, pero huwag sobra. Baka masayang ang* taxpayer's money, *ang panahon* (We need to conduct some investigations, but not too much. It might be a waste of taxpayers' money and time.)."

Last year, Honasan went into hiding for several months after he was implicated in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny and an alleged coup plot in February 2006.

After his sensational arrest, he was detained for five months before he was allowed to post bail in April, in the homestretch of the campaign.

Like Honasan, winning GO senatorial candidate former Navy junior officer Antonio Trillanes IV is also facing a rebellion case before the Makati Trial Court for the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

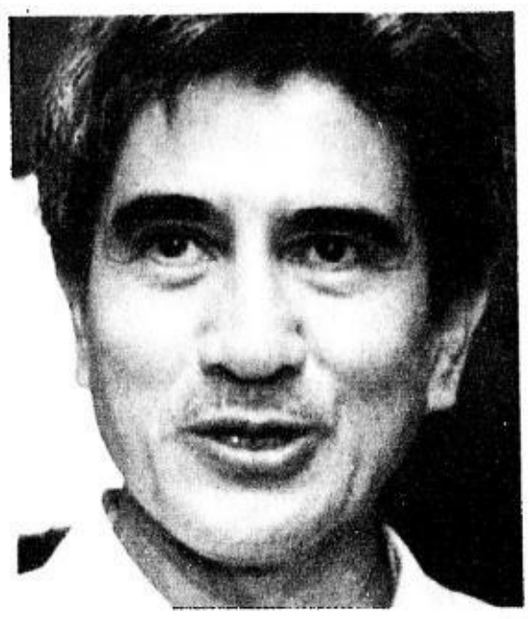
But unlike Honasan, Trillanes was not allowed to post bail. He is detained in a Marine brig at Fort Bonifacio.

Honasan said he should have no problem attending Senate sessions since he is on bail.

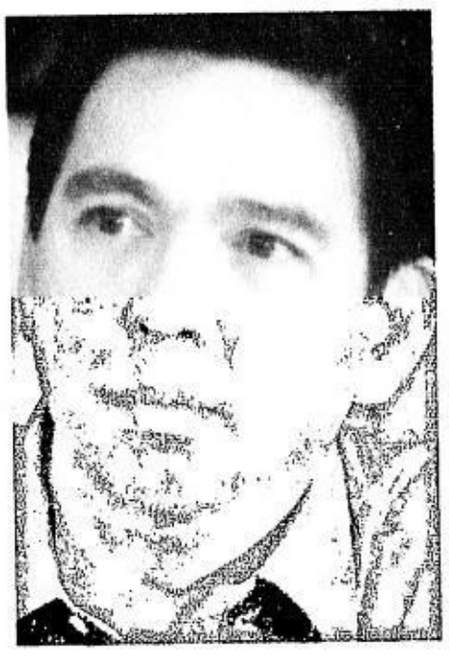
"I don't know about the case of ... Trillanes," he said.

But Honasan has some unsolicited advice for the neophyte politician Trillanes, who has declared he would prioritize President Macapagal-Arroyo's impeachment once he is elected.

Senators serve as the judge in an impeachment trial. *Dona Pazzibugan*



HONASAN



RECTO

Recto accepting defeat an act of statesmanship, says De Castro

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO yesterday said he was saddened by former Sen. Ralph Recto's impending defeat in the May 14 senatorial elections but praised the latter for his statesmanship by conceding.

"This is a clear sign of Senator Recto's fine character and great statesmanship. Accepting defeat without any showing of bitterness or sour graping makes Senator Recto already a winner," De Castro said.

The Commission on Elections has yet to complete its canvass of votes for the senatorial race.

Good legislator

According to De Castro, the Senate has lost a good legislator and public servant in Recto.

Recto, 43, served 15 years in Congress, nine years as congressman of Batangas and six years as senator. He is the second Team Unity senatorial candidate to concede defeat. The first was former Presidential Management Staff Head Mike Defensor. Rep. Prospero Pichay also conceded yesterday *(See story on Page 1)*.

Recto' wife, former Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos, won the gubernatorial race in Batangas in the local elections.

De Castro said that Recto was a good man and a good friend.

Wednesday Group

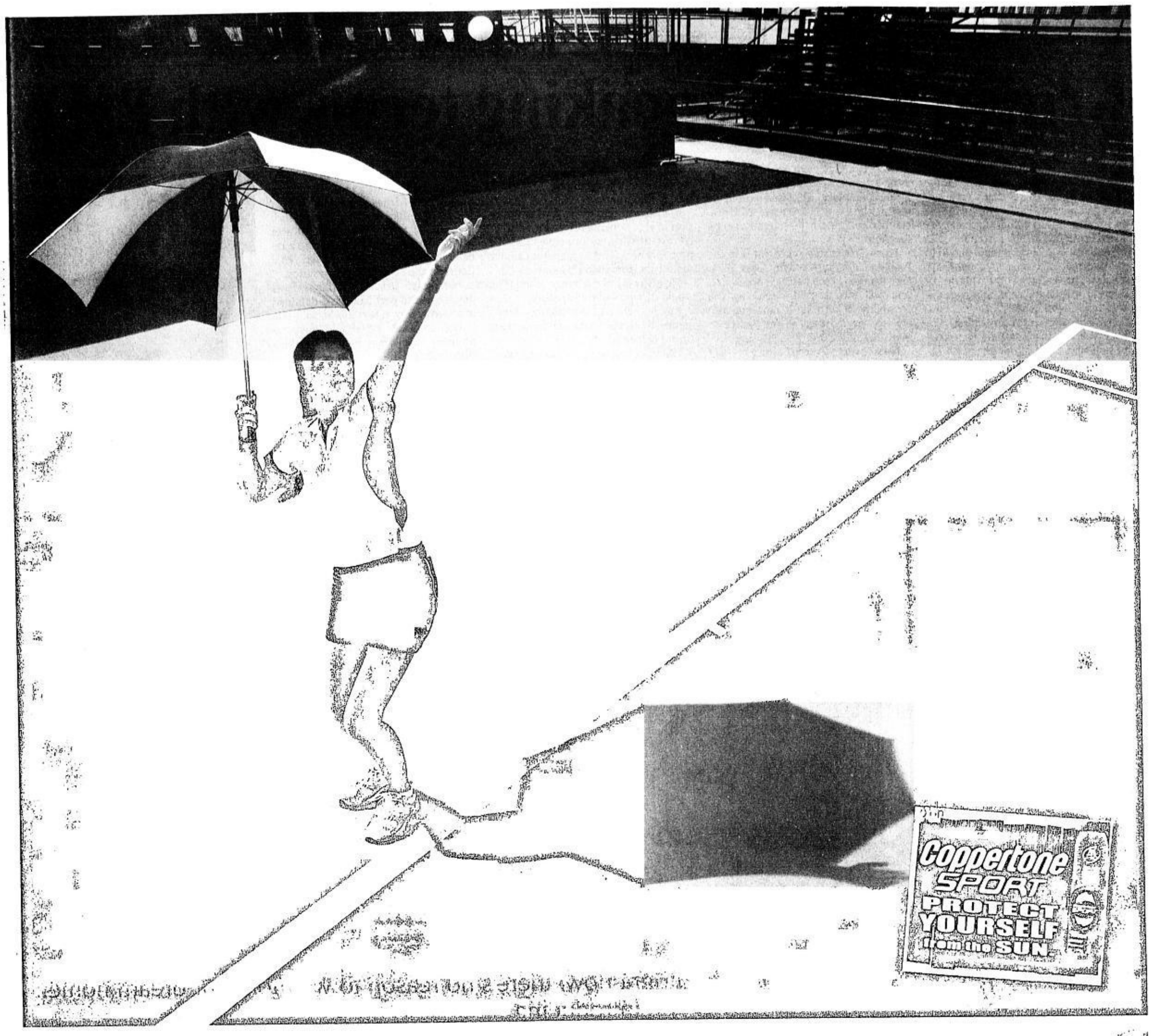
He said, however, that the so-called Wednesday Group, of which he and Recto were members, would still be intact. Other members of the group are Senate President Manny Villar, Francis Pangilinan and Joker Arroyo. They are headed for victory in the ongoing canvassing of votes for the senatorial race by the Commission on Elections.

De Castro was also a member when he was still in the Senate. He continued to attend their Wednesday meetings.

Not rejection

"Our group would still be solid even if Senator Recto has left the Senate," the Vice President stressed. "The Wednesday Group is founded on friendship and sharing of ideas on public service. Wednesday Group is beyond just politics," De Castro said. The group members would always support Recto in whatever endeavor the latter would take.

Earlier, De Castro said that the dominance of opposition winners and the people's choice of mutiny leaders Gregorio Honasan and Antonio Trillanes in the senatorial race did not mean a rejection of President Macapagal-Arroyo.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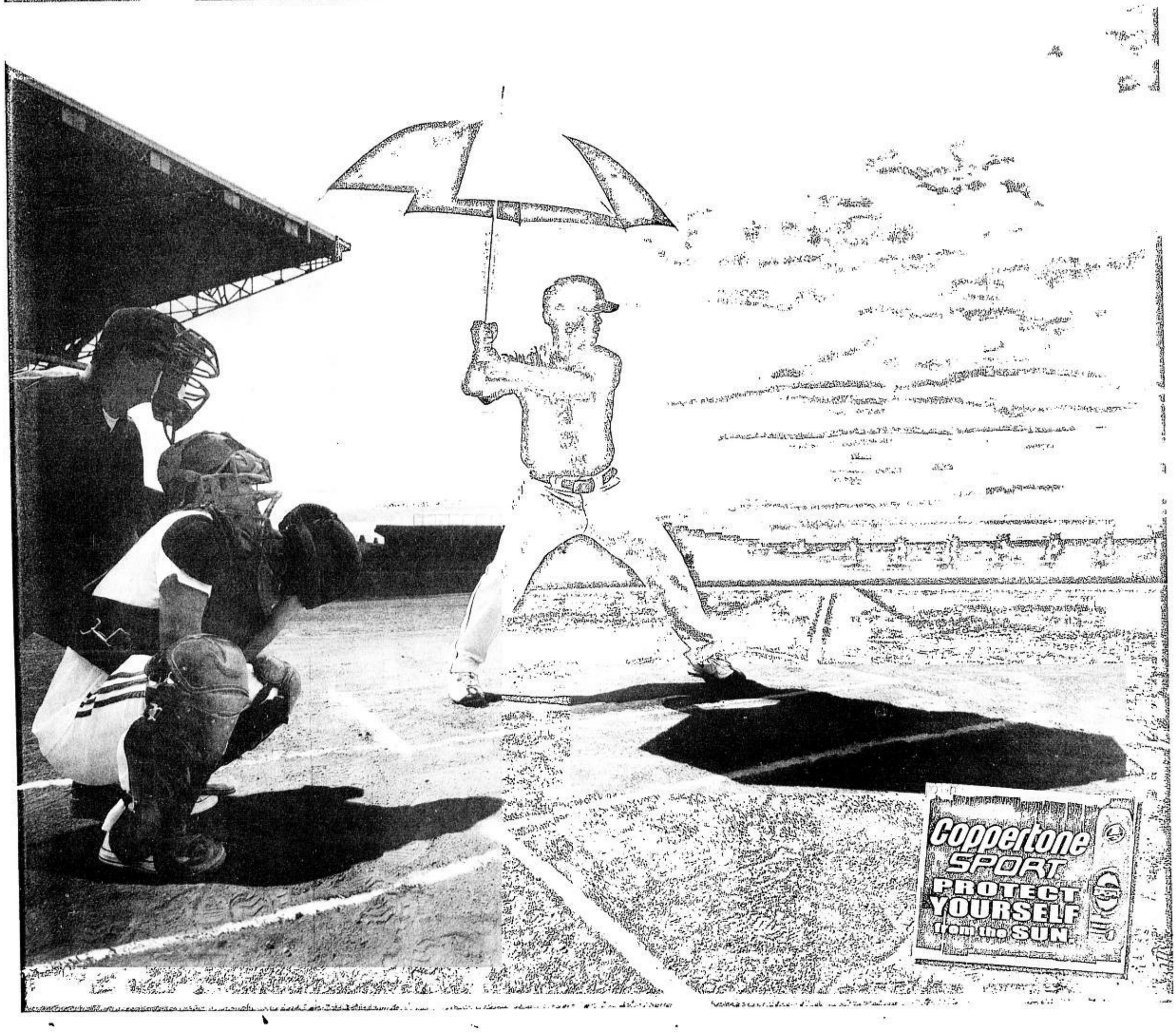
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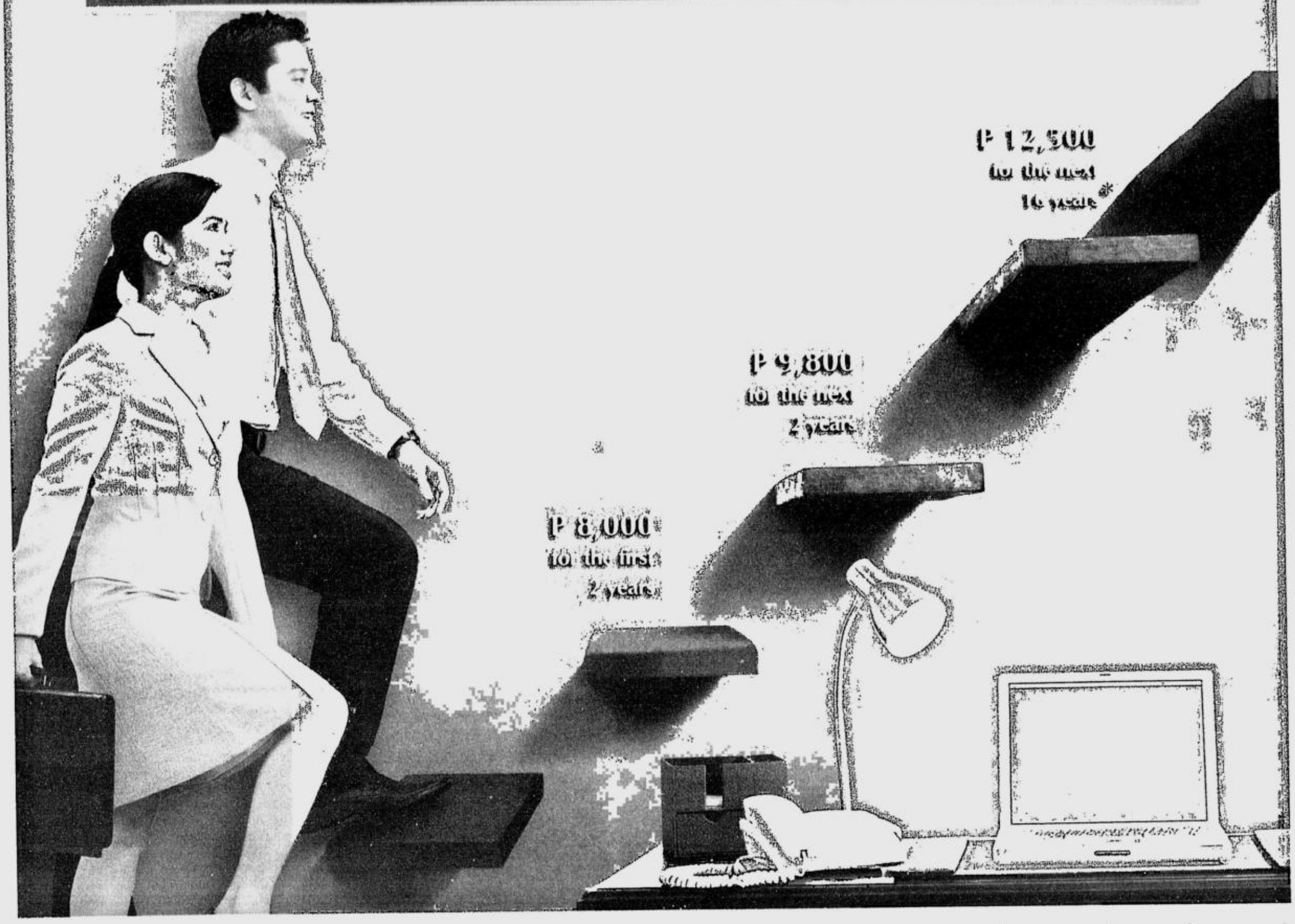

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
AMBERGRIS SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 31/F Discovery Ctr., 25 ADB Ave., Pasig City	Chaopei Guo	Program Administrator for the SAP Part Edge Account
GOLF EN SKY TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. 12/F Ramon Magsaysay Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Manila	Sang Hun Woo	General Manager
POYRY ENERGY INC. 8/F King's Court I Bldg., 2129 Pasong Tamo St., 1231 Makati City	Peter Heinzelmann	Project Manager
PHARSIGHT INC. Unit 2008 Herrera Tower, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Michael Richard Harris	Chief Executive Officer
THE ZENITAKA CORPORATION Unit 1002, 139 Corporate Center, Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Go Kato	Project Engineer
SAENG MYEONG SARANG ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC CORP. 5368 Sunlink Bldg., Gen. Luna St., Brgy. Pob. Makati City	Il Hwan Kim	Vice President
HAFELE PHILIPPINES, INC. 103 Center Business Park, Amang Rodriguez Ave., Manggahan, Pasig City	Veli Matti Kaikkonen	Vice President/ Managing Director
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Michael John Henderson	Managing Director
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC. 53rd Flr., PBCOM Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Hongmei Wang	Public Relations Manager
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC. 53rd Flr., PBCOM Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Shuwei Zeng	Technical Consultant
PJ & GT COM. INC. Unit 401 Emilia Bldg., Batangas cor. Finlandia, San Isidro, Makati City	Youngkyun Hong	Administration Manager
FUJITSU TEN SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F East Tower, PSE Ctr., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Takotomo Amie	Section Manager Automotive Electronics Department
AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY MANILA Level 24 Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Gillian Lesley Pickering	Specialist
FRESH'N NATURAL FOODS, INC. Unit 927 Cityland Shaw Tower, 8003 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City	Mark Chorun	Business Development Manager
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LTD. 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Sima Malla	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LTD. 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Odelia Levy	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LTD. 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Omri-Michael Levy	Customer Support Staff
BAYVIEW TECHNOLOGIES, INC. 43/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave. cor. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Xinyu Liu	Forum Manager Mahjong Design
BAYVIEW TECHNOLOGIES, INC. 43/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Min Wu	Chinese Customer Support Associate
SPORTS BOOKIE ONLINE, INC. 24/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, 252 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Ai Chia Tan	Customer Support Staff
LEEKIE ENTERPRISES, INC. Burgundy Corporate Tower, 252 24/F Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Tony Hermanto	Customer Support Staff
LEEKIE ENTERPRISES, INC. Burgundy Corporate Tower, 252 24/F Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Cheong Wei Ting	Accounting Clerk
LEEKIE ENTERPRISES, INC. Burgundy Corporate Tower, 252 24/F Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Suhariadi Hadian	Customer Support Staff
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3,4,5 Basement Export Bank Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Herman	Technician
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3,4,5 Basement Export Bank Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Ngiap Chia Tan	Technician
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3,4,5 Basement Export Bank Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Teo Huip Yap	Master Trainer
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3,4,5. Basement Export Bank Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Kian Yap Gan	Asst. Supervisor
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3,4,5. Basement Export Bank, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Roni Widiyanto	IT Manager
SILVER GOOSE 8 INTERNATIONAL, INC. Unit 3,4,5. Basement Export Bank, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City	Soon Yee Neo	Supervisor

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

In commemoration of the 109th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Philippine Independence, DOLE will hold a "Mega Job and Livelihood Fair" on June 12, 2007 at Rizal Park, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. For more information, call 3030364 / 3035922

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–June 6, 2007)

Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka
Republika ng Pilipinas
(National Agricultural and Fishery Council)
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN NG PAGSASAKA AT PANGINGISDA
Diliman, Lungsod ng Quezon
Tel. No. 926-8741 to 65 local 510

Tender No.: 30TH 2KR GAUF FY 2006

INVITATION TO BID

The National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC) hereby invites sealed bids for the sale of 15,607 metric tons of ammonium sulphate fertilizer with shipment date on or before August 15, 2007 under the 2KR Grant Assistance for Underprivileged Farmers.

Bid documents shall be available for issuance starting June 6, 2007 from NAFC BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).

For purposes of clarification, a pre-bid conference will be held on June 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the Apacible Conference Room, Apacible Hall, DA Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Fully completed sealed bids should be submitted not later than 2:00 p.m. on June 12, 2007. Bids submitted after the scheduled time will not be accepted.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Florelliz P. Avellana at Tel. Nos. 929-8234 and 920-3992.

(Sgd.) **ELMER G. ESTIANDAN**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - June 6 & 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Center for Health Development – Bicol
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Naga City
Telephone Nos. (054) 473-69-36
E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo.com
Fax No. (054) 473-69-36
Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph/bmc/index.htm

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER**, through **General Appropriations Act** intends to apply specified sum for the following projects:
   a) **Project : PROCUREMENT OF VARIOUS HOUSEKEEPING SUPPLIES (IAEB No. 2007-06)**
   Approved Budget for the Contract: **PESOS TWO MILLION THREE HUNDRED THIRTY TWO THOUSAND FIVE (PhP2,332,005.00) ONLY**
   Sale of Bid Documents: June 6 to 15, 2007
   Pre-Bid Conference: June 15, 2007 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
   Bid Opening: June 27, 2007 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
   Price of Bid Documents: ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (PhP1,500.00)
   b) **Project : PROCUREMENT OF VARIOUS OFFICE SUPPLIES (IAEB No. 2007-07)**
   Approved Budget for the Contract: **PESOS ONE MILLION TWO HUNDRED FORTY EIGHT THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED (PhP1,248,800.00) ONLY**
   Sale of Bid Documents: June 6 to 15, 2007
   Pre-Bid Conference: June 15, 2007 – 2:00 P.M. BMC Library
   Bid Opening: June 27, 2007 – 2:00 P.M. BMC Library
   Price of Bid Documents : ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (PhP1,500.00)
   Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the above stated project. Deliveries of the goods are stated on the schedule of requirements.
   The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon; 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M., except weekends and Holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents for the project may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as stated above. The method of payment will be in the form of Cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address, date and time stated above. The bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following forms, in the amount at least equal to and not lower than a percentage of the ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:
   1. **Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit** (1% of ABC)
   2. **Bank guarantee** (1.5% of ABC)
   3. **GSIS Surety Bond** (2.5% of ABC)
   Late bids shall not be accepted.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative/s who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Contact Address: BICOL MEDICAL CENTER, Concepcion Peñafrancia, Naga City
Telephone Nos: (054) 473-6936; (054) 473-75-78
E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo.com
Fax No: (054) 473-6936
Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph/bmc/index.htm
Contact Person: JENSY S. ONG, MD, FPOA, Chairman

(Sgd.) JENSY S. ONG, MD, FPOA
Chairman

(PDI–June 6, 2007)

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the:

Project	Quantity	Approved Budget*	Cost of Bid Documents
Supply, Delivery, Installation and Other Related Services of Automated Tellering Machine (ATM)	Fifteen (15) units	P9,750,000.00	P 5,000.00
Source of Fund: DBP Fund			

*Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening

Expected Date of Completion: Sixty (60) Calendar Days upon receipt of Purchase Order

Schedule of Activities:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Pre-Bidding Conference	June 13, 2007 (Wednesday) at 1:30 p.m.	6th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Submission of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals	"On or before" 10:00 a.m. of June 26, 2007 (Tuesday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals (Prospective bidders are encouraged to witness this activity)	June 26, 2007 (Tuesday) at 10:30 a.m.	6th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. Prospective Bidders must have been authorized to **Supply, Deliver and Maintain Automated Tellering Machine for at least three (3) years.** Only Bids from Bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification procedure.

Interested parties may download these forms at **www.devbankphil.com.ph** and at the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) of the Department of Budget and Management. Prospective bidders may secure the bid documents and Eligibility Requirement Forms from the BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php5,000.00.

The prospective bidders are advised to check the Bank's website and the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) for bid bulletin and announcements regarding the project.

The Bank reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further inquiries, please call telephone numbers 8125702/8189511 loc. 2610

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - June 6, 2007)

Airport tightens fuel depot security

By Tarra Quismundo

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL Airport Authorities (Miaa) has intensified security around its jet fuel depot in Pasay City following reports of a foiled plot to bomb jet fuel lines in New York's JFK airport.

Shortly after the botched attack made headlines, round-the-clock patrols were deployed around the fuel facility that houses storage and refilling equipment of private oil firms, airport security chief Angel Atutubo said yesterday.

The NY terror plot was said to have been deadlier than the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, which killed thousands when terrorists flew two commercial planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

"We increased police visibility. We deployed a mobile patrol unit in front of the depot to guard it at all times," Atutubo said.

The depot is located between the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminals 1 and 2, close to the international cargo terminal.

Inside the terminals, airport security guards, Miaa police and the Philippine National Police Aviation Security Group have been told to make their rounds with extra care.

Atutubo, however, said there was no "imminent threat" to Philippine airports. He said Miaa has not received any security advisory from the International Civil Aviation Organization, a body that normally issues security alerts to the world's airports.

Ban on liquids to be lifted soon

By Tarra Quismundo

THERE IS STILL A TOTAL BAN ON BRINGING liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) through the country's international airports although aviation authorities are preparing for a partial lifting of this ban as has been done in airports in other parts of the world.

Airport security chief Angel Atutubo said yesterday that the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) has begun readying information materials on new security screening procedures which would lift the total ban on LAGs. But he could not say when this would take effect.

Airports in the United States, Australia, Europe and other Asian cities have already been enforcing a revised regulation allowing 100 ml or less of LAGs in carry-on bags since March.

"We are preparing the pamphlets and signages. They have also started training personnel on the new screening procedure so that we will be ready for its implementation," Atutubo told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The Miaa has been seeking the downgrade on the total ban on LAGs but is awaiting the go-ahead from the Office for Transportation Security under the Department of Transportation and Communication which has the sole authority to approve new security procedures in the country's air and sea ports.

The LAGs ban was enforced in August last year in light of a foiled terror plot involving liquid bombs in the United Kingdom.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 6, 2007
9th Week in Ordinary Time
Norbet

1st Reading: Tb 3:1-11, 16-17
Gospel: Mark 12:18-27

The Sadducees came to Jesus. Since they claim that there is no resurrection, they questioned him in this way, "Master, in the Scriptures Moses gave us this law: 'If anyone dies and leaves a wife but no children, his brother must take the wife and give her a child who will be considered the child of his deceased brother.' Now, there were seven brothers. The first married a wife, but he died without leaving any children. The second took the wife and he, too, died leaving no children. The same thing happened to the third. Finally the seven died leaving no children. Last of all the woman died. Now, in the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her as wife."

Jesus replied, "You could be wrong in this regard because you understand neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. When they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry but are like the angels in heaven.

"Now, about the resurrection of the dead, have you never reflected on the chapter of the burning bush in the book of Moses? God said to him: I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now, he is the God, not of the dead but of the living. You are totally wrong."

Commentary

Tobit prays for mercy to the judge of the world. He asks for forgiveness for himself and his people in exile who have become a reproach to the nations. He is torn with grief and wants to die in his misery. And Sarah, the daughter of Ragouel is praying as well for release, for each time she tries to marry, her husband is killed on their wedding night—this happened seven times! She is grieved in spirit and wants to kill herself. And both prayers come to God, and Raphael (the archangel) is sent to heal them both. We are all bound together whether we are aware of it or not. And all things, situations and relationships can be healed and made whole. Our recourse has always been in God.

Jesus is mocked by the Sadducees (who don't believe in resurrection) with an unbelievable case of a woman with 7 husbands (all brothers and leaving no children with her). Who would be her husband in heaven? No one is! God is the God of the living and we belong to the living God, not to any relationship on earth. Our relationships on earth are meant to express faithfully and gracefully that we are God's, now and forever. Do we know who lays claim to us?

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications) & http://www.claretphilippines.org (Claretian Missionaries in the Philippines)

Japan agency upgrades RP credit rating

By Michelle V. Remo

THE JAPAN CREDIT RATING Agency has revised its outlook on the Philippines from "stable" to "positive," citing the country's improving macro-economic climate.

A "positive" outlook means an upgrade in the country's credit rating is likely in the near term. An increase in the credit rating in turn would mean an improvement in a government's credit worthiness, which would result in lower interest rates imposed on its borrowings.

The JCRA's current credit rating on the Philippine government's long-term and foreign currency-denominated debts is at "BBB–," which is within investment grade.

"The improving fiscal position [of the Philippines] has triggered a virtuous cycle of prompting the appreciation of the peso, which in turn has sent both the inflation rate and interest rates falling," the JCRA said in a statement.

The Japanese-based credit watchdog also cited developments, including the 6.9-percent economic growth rate in the first quarter, the rising remittance inflows from overseas Filipino workers, and improving balance-of-payments position for its decision to revise its outlook on the Philippines.

Highest in 17 years

The economic growth of 6.9 percent in the first quarter, which was partly boosted by higher income by the services and export sectors, was the highest in 17 years.

Economic managers also said the government declining budget deficit helped make a business climate attractive for more investors.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the improved credit outlook was an indication of the confidence of the international financial community in the Philippines' ability to sustain its fiscal reform programs.

The government's budget deficit dropped to P64.8 billion last year from P146.8 billion in 2005.

"We are pleased that JCRA recognizes that the discipline of the administration to focus on the economy and the nation's overall economic health is producing sustainable results," Teves told a press conference.

The JCRA also said in a statement that the improved outlook was based on its belief that the political situation in the Philippines would not worsen, with opposition candidates winning majority of the Senate seats.

JCRA said any uncertainty over the continuance of existing government reforms brought about by the victory of the opposition candidates in the Senate race would be offset by the overwhelming victory of administration candidates in the House of Representatives.

Political stability

"The ruling camp's outright victory in the House of Representatives will help enhance political stability as it will deter opposition attempts to impeach the President," the JCRA added.

In a related development, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday the Philippines is now the the top choice among major US companies for finance, technology, telecommunications and consumer products, as well as accounting business process outsourcing (BPO) services.

This was the information given by Cynthia Houlton, senior analyst of RBC Capital Markets, who spoke at a business networking reception organized by the Business Process Outsourcing Council, the Philippine Consulate General, and the Philippine Trade Office in New York last week.

Houlton spoke on the topic "Global Sourcing and Finance and Accounting Business Process Outsourcing Services," according to a report from Consul General Cecilia Rebong in New York. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Disruptive effect of soaring peso worries BSP gov

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS GOVERNOR Amando Tetangco acknowledged for the first time that the peso's rapid rise was worrisome and could have "disruptive" consequences.

The peso hit a high of 45.58 to the dollar Monday, its strongest level since September 2000. It retreated Tuesday to a low of 45.85 and settled at 45.83.

"There's a bit of concern with the rate of appreciation, which may cause volatility and lead to some disruptive effects," Tetangco told reporters.

"We prefer to see an orderly adjustment." It was the first time the BSP has conceded that the peso's rise was a cause for concern.

Just two weeks ago, BSP deputy governor Diwa Guinigundo told reporters that while the unit continued to strengthen, "relative to the other regional currencies, such as the (Indonesian) rupiah and the (Thai) baht, we remain competitive." In February Sergio Ortiz-Luis, treasurer of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, warned that Philippine exports growth would be capped to between 10 and 12 percent this year due to the rising peso. *AFP*

Comelec set to decide on party-list row

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS IS SET TO issue its ruling on the conflicting slates of nominees of several party-list groups which are poised to win in the just-concluded elections.

"The resolutions have been decided upon and are now being routed to the commissioners," Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said in a press conference yesterday.

Buhay Hayaang Yumabong, a party-list group identified with the El Shaddai charismatic group, is among those with two different slates of nominees. Buhay is currently leading in the Comelec's party-list count.

Based on the latest unofficial media tally of the Comelec canvassing of party-list votes, Buhay leads with 1,112,486 votes or 7.95 percent of the nearly 14 million votes cast for party-list.

One Buhay nominee slate is led by its acting president and secretary-general Hans Christian Señeres while the other faction is led by Rene Velarde, who was nominated by former Buhay president Melquiades Robles.

Aside from Buhay, groups such as Alagad, Veterans Foundation of the Philippines and the Bagong Tao Movement also have two separate slates who were fielded by feuding factions.

However, Abalos hinted that the Comelec rulings on the other groups would only be issued once they win in the elections.

"If the party doesn't win, then the issue on the two slates would already be moot and academic," Abalos said.

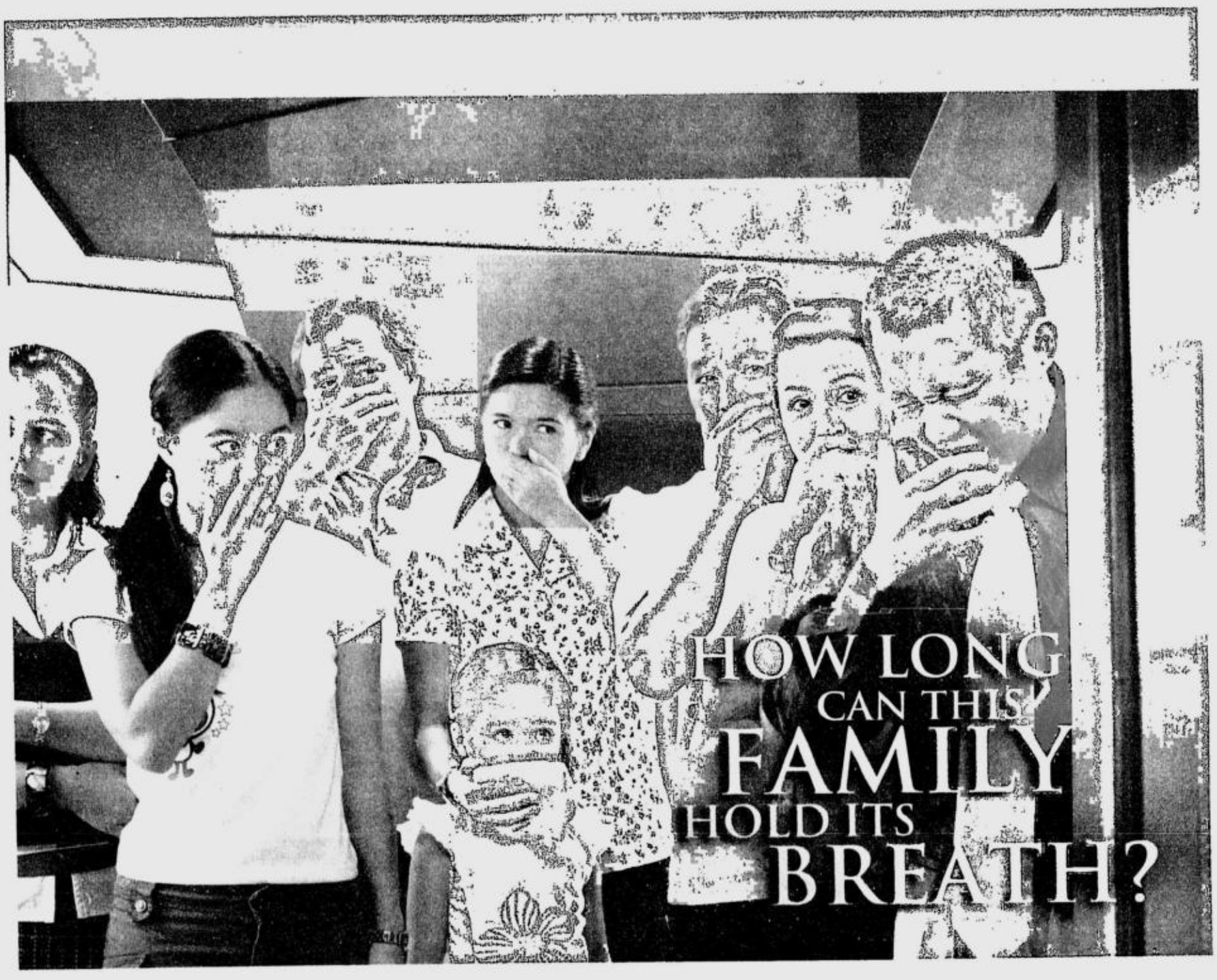
A party-list group needs to win two percent of all the votes cast for the party-list to be entitled to at least one seat in the House of Representatives. Under the law, however, the top contender will be entitled to three seats.

Abalos yesterday also said that the Comelec would bar those who ran but lost in the 2004 election but who are now nominees of winning party-list groups in the 2007 election from taking a seat in the House.

The Comelec chief cited Republic Act No. 7941 or the Party-List System Act of 1995, Section 8 which states that a group's list of nominees "shall not include any candidate for any elective office or person who has lost his bid for an elective office in the immediately preceding election."

Abalos did not name names but a scan of the list of party-list nominees submitted to Comelec showed he may be referring to lawyer Melanio Mauricio Jr. and broadcast journalist Jose 'Jay' Sonza, second and third nominees, respectively, of the Bagong National Cultural Society of the Philippines (Batas), who both ran for a Senate seat in the 2004 election but lost.

Batas placed 10th based on the unofficial media tally of the Comelec canvassing for party-list votes, garnering about 2.69 percent of the votes cast.



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References:
1. JFK Health World Museum
2. http://www.birdavianflu.com/birdfluairbornetransmission.htm
3. http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm

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Missing activist, media icon shared passion for farming

From page A1

experimenting in organic farming since 1998 at the 12-ha farm in Barangay Tartaro, San Miguel, Bulacan, that Joe Burgos bought in the late 1980s with the intention of making it his retirement home.

The farm inspired the young Jonas to pursue a course in agriculture. He had logged two years in a political science course at the San Beda College course at the San Beda College in Manila when he decided to study agriculture at the Benguet State University.

After graduation, he lived at the farm and devoted his time to organic farming, his mother said.

Jonas was particularly interested in organic rice farming—a passion that he shared with his father, who had by then become semi-retired from journalism and was spending his days as a "gentleman-farmer."

In fact, Edita said, a part of the farm was devoted to rice paddies specifically for Jonas' experiments.

Missing since April 28

Jonas, 37, was abducted by three unidentified men and one woman while he was having lunch at the Ever Gotesco mall in Quezon City about 1 p.m. on April 28.

He has been missing since then.

At least two witnesses told Jonas' mother that he was alone when the group dragged him to a maroon Revo van with Plate No. TAB 194.

The military became a prime suspect in the abduction when the plate number was traced to another vehicle that had been impounded by the 56th Infantry Battalion at its headquarters in Norzagaray, Bulacan, since June 2006.

Lt. Col. Noel Clement, who was the battalion commander until February this year, and his replacement, Lt. Col. Melquiades Feliciano, have both said the license plates may have been stolen by illegal settlers around the military camp.

Clement, Feliciano and three other officers—Lt. Col. Edison Caga, Cpl. Castro Bugallon and Pfc. Jose Villena, all assigned to the 56th IB—have denied involvement in Jonas' abduction.

But witnesses also told Edita Burgos that her son was shouting "Activist *lang po ako* (I'm just an activist)!" when his abductors dragged him into the van. Jonas' words tended to bolster the suspicion that the military was behind his disappearance.

In a PowerPoint presentation that the Armed Forces uses as briefing material for soldiers, several groups are listed as "enemies of the state." Among these groups is the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, the mother organization of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulacan whose members Jonas had been training in organic farming since 1999.

'Peace Zone'

Joe Burgos' We Forum was critical of martial law and the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

In December 1982, military agents raided the tabloid's office. Burgos and 13 other staff members and columnists—among them Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo, Dean Armando Malay, Cris Martinez and Teodoro Cecilio—were detained for publishing stories that questioned the authenticity of Marcos' war medals.

They were held for a week at the Fort Bonifacio stockade and released under house arrest while awaiting trial for subversion.

At the gate of his farm, Joe Burgos had put up a sign saying: "Peace Zone. Violence against all beneficial creatures is prohibited."

Indeed, the farm is a peaceful place, with native chickens roaming among rows of fruit trees, seasonal shrubs, flowers and vegetables.

Joe Burgos died on Nov. 16, 2003, and was buried in the farm as he had wished.

SECOND TIME AROUND: CHR Chair Purification Quisumbing and Commissioner Dominador Calamba II chide the military intelligence chief for his failure to attend for the second time a hearing into the Jonas Burgos abduction and continued disappearance. JOAN BONDOC

Spy chief snubs Jonas hearing

From page A1

mount to an investigation where subpoenaed persons would be told to swear to their statements without being apprised of their constitutional right to remain silent or guard against self-incrimination.

The CHR has a standing order for the AFP and the Philippine National Police to locate the missing Burgos. (*See related story on Page A1.*)

This is the second CHR hearing on Burgos' disappearance. The first was held last month, and Bangit likewise missed it.

At yesterday's hearing, Commissioner Dominador Calamba raised doubt about the AFP's avowed inability to locate Burgos dead or alive, given the resources at the military's disposal.

Calamba told Ayuyao that the public might find "those excuses of yours" hard to believe. He was referring to the AFP's claim that the license plates that witnesses had seen on the vehicle used by Burgos' abductors were merely "stolen" from a jeep impounded in an Army camp for "illegal logging."

'Operational matters'

Earlier in the hearing, after Ayuyao reported that Bangit could not make it because of "operational matters" that needed his attention, the lawyer already got a mouthful from Calamba.

"I notice that he doesn't attend to the subpoenas sent to him and sends lower-ranking officials. I don't know if he has any respect for the [CHR] as a civilian office," Calamba said, adding:

"That's why you (Isafp) are always pilloried by the press."

At some point in the hearing, Quisumbing cut Ayuyao short when he again tried to speak from the sidelines.

The CHR chair said the panel would not recognize Ayuyao—not after he had "lectured" the commission on the propriety of the proceedings—unless he took the stand.

Thieves in well-guarded camp?

In his own exchange with Ayuyao, Calamba said in reference to the alleged theft of the license plates: "I don't know who will buy that idea.

"We don't believe that you couldn't find Burgos with all the operatives you have."

Calamba later clarified that the hearing was not intended to prosecute the military but to give it a chance to air its side, especially since media reports supposedly tended to attribute Burgos' abduction to the military.

In grilling Lt. Col. Noel Clement, the former commander of the 56th Infantry Battalion in Norzagaray, Bulacan, Calamba wondered why a supposedly "well-guarded" military camp would lose impounded materials to thieves.

Clement said security "lapses" could occur given the size of the camp, but added that he had yet to check whether the theft occurred during his stint as camp commander.

"What your men do or fail to do is your responsibility, being the battalion commander," Calamba told Clement.

In contrast, the commissioners appeared to be more appreciative of the report of Senior Supt. Joel Napoleon Coronel on the PNP investigation of the Burgos case.

"Unfortunately, we have not located him," said Coronel, chief of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) for the National Capital Region.

He said the Burgos family had been shown "three exhumed cadavers"—unclaimed bodies buried in Bataan—but had not identified any to be that of the missing activist.

Coronel also said the CIDG had "contacted" by phone military camps and other police camps, as well as the National Bureau of Investigation, to check if Burgos had actually been "arrested for lawful reasons."

No inspection of Isafp

But "protocol," he said, had prevented the CIDG from entering the Isafp compound at the military general headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"Not everyone is allowed to go inside [it]," he said.

Coronel also said that on May 29, a security guard who witnessed Burgos' abduction on April 28 was shown photos of two Army soldiers who had apprehended the "illegal logging" jeep in Bulacan.

He said the guard did not identify the soldiers as involved in the abduction.

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Roxas warns: JPEPA ...

From page A1

the Senate to ratify the Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) amid concerns aired by Tokyo for the early approval.

The chair of the Senate committee on economic affairs said his studies showed that 20 percent of Philippine products covered by the JPEPA would be adversely affected because the deal would reduce duties on Japanese exports to the Philippines to zero from between 10 percent and 30 percent.

"The domestic industries that would be affected are in garments, electronics such as toasters, washing machines and cooking ranges, and automobiles and spare parts," said Roxas.

Top dollar earners

He noted that the three sectors were the country's top dollar exports.

The agreement was signed by Ms Arroyo and then Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Helsinki in September 2006.

The deal, which is similar to agreements that Japan already has with Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, goes beyond liberalization of trade in goods and services.

It includes measures to ensure the smooth movement of people, capital and information, and covers areas like investment and trade facilitation, as well as cooperation in science and technology, human resource development, small and medium enterprises, and the environment.

Environmentalists

But even before it could be submitted to the Senate for ratification, it drew objections from environmentalists fearing that its tariff-reduction provisions might pave the way for the entry of hazardous wastes from Japan.

Roxas said that in exchange for opening its market to Japan, the Philippines would be allowed to bring its agriculture products and send more professionals to Japan.

On paper, the JPEPA offered a fair trade between the Philippines and Japan, he said.

Roxas was optimistic that the pact would be given serious consideration by the Senate if the government revised the deal to get a better trade-off.

Tough requirements

But he said that shipping Philippine bananas to Japanese groceries or sending Filipino nurses to Japanese hospitals was easier said than done.

Japan is widely known for aggressively protecting its farmers and labor sector from foreign competition with its vast array of non-tariff barriers like stringent quarantine rules and hiring requirements.

Roxas noted, for example, that the JPEPA's provisions on the hiring of Filipino nurses were so tough "it would be difficult for the Philippines to comply with it in the next three to five years."

"They want our nurses to be fluent in both written and spoken (Nihonggo) and to pass a test in (Nihonggo). It takes time to master this," he said.

In the meantime, giant Japanese companies would take advantage of the JPEPA's zero tariffs, he said.

The senator said giant electronic and automobile companies from Japan would not mind closing down their production facilities in the country because they would still be selling their products at lower tariffs.

"But what will happen to the thousands of employees in these industries?" he said.

Roxas believed that the agreement's economic repercussions were more serious than the toxic waste controversy that stalled the signing of the deal.

But he did not share the environmentalist groups' fears that Japan would be sending its toxic wastes to the Philippines.

"What prevents the entry is Republic Act No. 6969 or the Toxic and Hazardous Wastes Law, which will prevail in this case no matter what the treaty says," Roxas said.

Top priority

Still, he said the Senate was keeping an open mind on the deal.

Senate President Manuel Villar said the declaration of Malacañang that the agreement was its "top priority" following Ms Arroyo's meeting with Japan Prime Minister Senzo Abe last month amounted to a pressure on the Senate to ratify the deal.

"It's not going to be easy. It's going to be tough especially the toxic issue. But in fairness to the proponent of the treaty, we have to give it a fair hearing," Villar said.

In a meeting with Ms Arroyo, Abe agreed that a formal exchange of letters be made at the ministerial level to assure the Filipino public and the Senate that no Japanese toxic waste would be dumped on the Philippines.

Abe said it would be better to put what he promised in document form. "We will be ready to move in that direction," Villar said.

TEACHER-COP. A member of the Ilocos region mobile group takes over as teacher in Alibangsay School in La Union. JONATHAN VICENCIO

Cops 'moonlight' as teachers in far-flung areas

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE IN THE Ilocos region will be continuing this school year its program of assigning policemen-teachers to remote rebel-infested areas.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, the region's PNP commander, told reporters the command has deployed at least six police officers who can teach to three areas in Northern Luzon.

For this school year, Bataoil said two policemen teachers have been assigned to Dingras, Ilocos Norte, two to Bagulin, La Union, and two to Natividad, Pangasinan.

"These areas are far from the center of governance with frequent sightings of the NPA (New People's Army). We want to assure residents here that their government is still working for them," Bataoil said.

Under the 2-year-old program called *"Pulis Ko, Teacher Ko,"* members of the Provincial Mobile Group are fielded to these areas to teach public school students basic arithmetic and English.

"They are already assigned there anyway and we figured out a way to make good use of our men while at the same time contributing something to the community," said Bataoil.

The members of the Provincial and Regional Mobile Groups are usually at the frontline in the fight against communist insurgents.

"These policemen who are teaching were either former teachers or have education degrees," said Bataoil, adding that the service is given free of charge.

"We want to do the little things that are touching people's lives. The feedback has been good. Community leaders have told us they appreciate the service we are rendering," he said.

The policemen-teachers are also involved in community work like sprucing up school buildings and constructing classrooms, Bataoil said.

DAY JOB. A policeman and his dog guard the town hall in Agoo, La Union, for the policeman's regular duty. JONATHAN VICENCIO

Teenaged rebel falls

By Christine O. Avendano

A 16-YEAR-OLD BOY, believed to be a New People's Army member, was seized by the military last weekend following an encounter with communist rebels in Panukulan, Quezon.

Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres said yesterday that aside from the arrest of the NPA minor, troops overran the NPA camp of the rebels.

Torres said that on the morning of June 3, troops encountered some 30 NPA rebels under a certain "Bricks" in a firefight that lasted for 30 minutes at barangay Milawid in Panukulan town.

He said the rebels then fled northwest, prompting the troops to pursue them and eventually seize their camp.

The troops also captured 16-year-old Bryan Tumaclay alias Balong and recovered subversive documents and other belongings in the camp.

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By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PHILHEALTH IS HEALTHY AND running after cheaters.

This is the assurance made by officials of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) after a Senate hearing revealed that the government agency lost P4 billion to fraudulent claims.

PhilHealth Officer-in-charge Valentin Guanio said that this year, they filed 427 cases for alleged fraudulent claims against hospitals and doctors and about 4,000 cases in the last seven years.

The cases, filed from 2000 to 2007, involved some P26 million—way below the P4 billion reported losses.

Guanio said it was possible that there could be "undetected" fraudulent claims along the way, but the figure would not be more than P26 million.

This was in contrast to earlier reports quoting PhilHealth Vice President Madeleine Valera who said the government company lost about P4 billion due to fraudulent claims.

Benchmark figure

Yesterday, Valera clarified that she was only talking about a "benchmark" figure.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III also said the quoted P4-billion figure was mere "speculation" he himself made in 2003. It refers to the possible amount of losses to bogus claims in a span of 10 years.

Duque explained that most fraudulent claims came from primary hospitals, affecting about 3,000 hospital beds, or close to 4 percent of the 85,000 total hospital bed capacity in the country.

In mentioning P4 billion, Valera said she just took 4 percent of the P100-billion cumulative reimbursements and administrative expenses of PhilHealth in the last 10 years.

She explained that this was just a reference figure used to assess if fraudulent claims were growing higher or lower.

She said that in the last few years, fraudulent claims on PhilHealth were way below 4 percent.

"I was not allowed to explain how I got the number," she told the INQUIRER, referring to her media interviews during the Senate hearing.

Detecting fraud

Guanio said it could even be below 2 percent, citing only the number of cases they had so far filed. The most common modus operandi is having "ghost patients," or claiming payments for patients who never existed, and declaring a longer period than the actual duration of confinement.

Duque said they were already setting up a database to detect suspicious trends in requesting reimbursements.

"(PhilHealth) is perhaps the second, if not the healthiest of all the government-owned corporations. It spent only P17 billion last year, when it collected about P23 billion," he said.

To detect fraud, Guanio said they have antifraud, arbitration and prosecution teams, all employing a total of 100 of the company's 4,000 employees.

Visayan Sea gets boost from UK reef survey

THE CENTRAL VISAYAN SEA will receive a boost in environmental protection when the UK-based Durham University's Coral Awareness and Research Expedition 2007 (DU CARE 2007) enters the Visayan seas next month.

DU CARE will resurvey all reef check sites in the Visayas Sea from previous years to assess the level of improvement or degradation in reef health. Scientists and students will pay particular attention to establishing new reef check sites, particularly in areas damaged by the recent oil spill in Guimaras Island, in order to assess the damage inflicted.

Create awareness

An important aspect of the project is awareness-building among local schools to educate students about the crucial importance of marine conservation for the fishing trade of future generations. Capabilities of local people will be enhanced in carrying out detailed anthropological surveys to gain local insights on existing sanctuaries and the extent of local knowledge of marine conservation.

To ensure sustainability from the start, DU CARE will involve local states and local executives. It will engage barangay captains, government officials, the Coast Guard, and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in their initiatives.

During these visits they will present the results of surveys and discuss methods already in place for preserving the seas, in addition to gathering suggestions for the future.

Improved

DU CARE 2007 combines specialist knowledge and expertise with NGO determination and grit. It is the fourth in a series of expeditions, which have been extremely successful.

In just six months, spread over three years, marine sanctuaries have been installed in damaged areas, strong links have been established with the Coastal Dynamics Foundation (CDF)in Cebu, public awareness of sustainable fishery and conservation effects has increased significantly and a great improvement in the marine biodiversity of protected areas has been seen.

The work of the CDF, including links with DU CARE, has been documented by BBC Earth Reports.

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14 achievers in public service honored

By Michelle V. Remo

FOR THE SEVEN RECOGNIZED achievers in public service, the joy they derive from being government employees is something that a high-paying corporate job cannot top.

Seeing how her fellow Filipinos benefit from her work was fulfillment enough so that she has never entertained the thought of leaving her job for greener pastures abroad, said Reinalda C. Raffinan, who works as an operations officer at the Department of the Interior and Local Governments (DILG).

Raffinan is one of the seven recipients of the "Achievers in Public Service Award" given out by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) during its 70th anniversary celebration last Friday.

Aside from recognizing outstanding government employees, the pension fund for state employees also cited seven outstanding government agencies during the celebration.

The government agencies cited as Achievers in Public Service Award were: the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the National Statistics Office, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the provincial government of Bulacan, the Jose Fabella Memorial School, the local government of Davao City, and the Mahalo Elementary School in Anahawan, Southern Leyte.

Raffinan spearheaded the operations of Patrol 117, the emergency hotline similar to the United States' 911 hotline. Patrol 117 is credited for helping prevent crime and for making emergency assistance more accessible.

Med tech

Not only was Raffinan instrumental in the implementation of the project, she also helped in training people on the operations of the Patrol 117 call centers.

"I actually finished medical technology, and I could have worked abroad if I wanted to. But I opted to stay in government because of the fulfillment I get from my job," Raffinan said in Filipino.

Other extraordinary achievements that helped Raffinan get the award include the implementation of the "Barangay Tanod Professionalization Program" and the "Child-Friendly Local Governance Program," among many others.

Pedro M. del Rosario is another awardee for whom the non-monetary rewards of his job is enough.

P35M saving

Del Rosario, who started out as a utility worker and now serves as an administrative aide at the Baguio City General Hospital, has a knack for repairing malfunctioning hospital equipment.

Although doing repairs was not really part of a job that involves only housekeeping, Del Rosario has been credited with helping the hospital save as much as P35 million for fixing vital equipment that would have otherwise needed replacing.

"[Del Rosario's] accomplishment contributed to the national interest of the government because it supports the austerity measure without sacrificing the quality of service being given to the patients," the GSIS said in the citation that was read during the awarding ceremony.

According to Del Rosario, knowing that he was helping in increasing the hospital's capability to serve its patients was what makes his life meaningful.

For Gerry B. Baucan, a level-III teacher at the Alfonso Tabora Elementary School in Baguio City, sharing what he knows with his charges while instilling in them the value of environmental protection is what keeps him passionately in love with his job.

Taking care of the future

"I wanted to teach children how to take care of the environment because doing so is one way to take care of their future," Baucan said in Filipino.

Baucan was recognized as one of the outstanding public servants for his several contributions to environmental awareness. With his leadership, the "Clean and Green Program" of the Alfonso Tabora Elementary School won for the school the "Cleanest Purok in the Barangay" award.

Baucan taught the schoolchildren proper collection, disposal and recycling of solid wastes that gave the school its reputation for being clean and green. The waste materials that were collected were sold and the proceeds used for the repair of classrooms.

Baucan also taught the parents and students in a project to construct a nursery on the school grounds for fruit-bearing trees. The seedlings were sold to the farmers and the proceeds were used to finance beautification projects and the improvement of the school's facilities.

Farmers' productivity

Carmen C. Cubrado, the agricultural officer for the local government of Pilar, Bohol, was recognized for her contributions to her farming community.

Pilar was plagued by soil erosion, a serious problem for a community heavily dependent on farming. But with Cubrado's leadership, Pilar was able to raise enough funds to support the implementation of various programs to improve farmers' productivity.

Among these were the Municipal Land Care Program, which taught farmers how to fight soil erosion, and the establishment of the "Rice Enhancement Compact Demonstration Farm," which promoted awareness on the use of certified hybrid rice seeds.

Cubrado is credited for helping improve the economic conditions of her community enough for Pilar to be lifted from 4th-class municipality to 5th-class municipality status.

Arelie C. Jacildo, a public school nurse in the Aringay district of La Union, is not your ordinary school nurse. Although she could very well have simplified her job by catering only to the students who visited the school clinic, Jacildo expanded the feeding programs to service neighboring schools.

"Many of our nurses are going abroad, but I cannot feel the same desire knowing many children in my community ware in need of health and education assistance," Jacildo said.

By presenting her proposed health programs to non-government organizations and private citizens, Jacildo was able to generate much-needed funds.

She helped in the implementation of the feeding program in 19 schools in Aringay and helped raise funds for the surgery of poor students.

Visiting poor kids

According to colleagues, Jacildo devotes much of her time to visiting poor children living in far-flung barangay, walking through mountain trails that cannot be reached by vehicle.

Melecio Fernandez is a social welfare assistant at the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Davao province. With his knowledge of plant propagation and motor vehicles, he has developed very useful rehabilitation programs for drug dependents involving these two fields.

Fernandez spearheaded the installation of an "orchidarium" at the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Drug Dependents in Bago, Davao City. His project was cited as one of the best therapies for rehabilitating drug dependents.

He was also instrumental in the teaching of young drug dependents at a rehabilitation center in Bago-Oshiro, Davao City welding, general body repair, painting and rewiring of vehicles.

He also prepared a project proposal on the Training of Technical Driving and Supervision, and trained drug dependent minors in basic driving techniques and the use of vehicle accessories and parts.

The last recipient of the Achievers in Public Service Award is Ninie C. del Rosario, an education supervisor in the Department of Education office in Davao City.

Del Rosario spearheaded a fund-raising project to finance feeding programs for schoolchildren in Davao City.

She also led in raising funds for the improvement of the facilities of the Sta. Ana Elementary School, such as the upgrading of laboratory equipment. Del Rosario is also credited with initiating the Science Festival at the Rizal Elementary School, which helped in promoting interest in science among the students.

Del Rosario, who has been a teacher for the past 23 years starting with an annual salary of P6,888, wrote and published science teaching modules for elementary teachers which are now in use among science teachers in Davao.

"That [small salary] did not bother me because I really love educating the children. If you enjoy your job, money will not matter so much. You will just realize that along the way, God will provide you with the things you need," she said.

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System handed out "Achievers in Public Service Awards" to seven state employees and seven state agencies at its recent 70th anniversary celebration on May 31. At left, Imelda Oyong Abad, Grade VI adviser, and Antonio A. Magallanes, head teacher III, of the Mahalo Elementary Schhol of Anahawan, Southern Leyte, receive the award for the school. Above are representatives of the 7 state agency awardees.

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Barbarians at the gate

EDITORIAL

IN HIS VALEDICTORY BEFORE THE SENATE, RALPH Recto made a political forecast pregnant with meaning. "Barbarians will soon appear at the gate to tear this institution down. Believe me, they shall not pass." He was referring, of course, to the Senate, and the often-discussed possibility that after the May election, the administration would revive its efforts to abolish the Senate. Recto confirmed that this is, indeed, what the country should expect.

The ultimate decision point in any move to change the Constitution is a plebiscite—an election. But after our most recent election—one that bluntly has to be called a disgrace—what are the prospects of a plebiscite being conducted efficiently, much less credibly? Very slim, indeed. But if there is one thing this country can ill-afford, it's a plebiscite on par, in terms of disreputableness, as the rigged Marcos-era referenda.

Benjamin Abalos has already been compared—by erstwhile supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo in media, no less—as being on par with Leonardo Perez. The Marcos-era Comelec chair went down in history as an official who was notoriously unable to count. For that reason, we've suggested that Abalos and his fellow commissioners should do the country a favor and resign. It will already be tough enough to put together the leadership, laws, equipment and training required for credible polls in 2010 without them adding to the problem.

The task takes on even greater urgency if it becomes clear the administration wants Charter change sooner rather than later. Having bungled the May 2007 election, a plebiscite, whether at the end of this year, to coincide with the barangay election, or sometime next year, with our without Abalos (who retires in February 2008) would in effect become a substitute for the May 2010 polls. For in that referendum would be decided the future course of the country.

Recto's choice of words to describe those he foresees as working for the abolition of the Senate is apt. The candidates who preferred bullets over ballots, bribery over an honest vote, electoral chicanery rather than respect for the true will of the people, are barbarians. They represent forces and interests diametrically opposed to everything our democratic project aspires to: the will of the majority, but not at the expense of the rights of any minority; a society in which civics matters, and where civilization stands for something other than brute force and the politics of plunder.

The energies of the Comelec, the Department of Justice, even the electoral tribunals of both Houses of Congress, would be better off spent running after the perpetrators and beneficiaries of electoral malpractices, including fraud. We have heard it said that the defining characteristic of our political system is that old, and tragic, cliché: Nice guys finish last. There is no incentive to campaign honorably, and for candidates and voters to obey the law, because the ones who win tend to be those who flout the law.

There have been enough allegations made in this election for an administration and a Comelec even remotely interested in restoring confidence in our institutions to start filing cases without fear or favor. Enough individuals have been caught red-handed breaking electoral laws, for prosecution to begin and taken to their logical conclusion. These require neither the consent of Congress nor the blessings of political parties nor even the support of the people. The only thing required is for officials to take their oath of office seriously, and harness the powers given them by the law.

Big fish and little fish—all must be caught, wriggling and squirming, in the same net. And the law dictates that the Comelec must be the one to cast that net. There will be citizens' groups aplenty willing to provide testimony. One fundamental lesson of this election was that whether it was the PPCRV or Lente or Namfrel, the citizenry did its part, and admirably so. Such civic-consciousness deserves better than to have the martyrs of those organizations (recall the PPCRV volunteers, in particular, who died in the line of duty leaving a concerned public to pass the hat to lend assistance to their bereaved families) die for nothing.

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Lim to open Mendiola to demonstrators

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

POLICE AND STUDENT RALLIERS CLASHED again at Mendiola last Monday. The students were protesting the increases in tuition fees; the police were trying to disperse them because rallies are banned in Mendiola, which is just a few blocks from Malacañang.

Students should be patient and wait. In a few weeks, Mendiola will be opened to them by the City of Manila and they can hold rallies there to their hearts' content. Sen. Alfredo Lim, who will take over as mayor of Manila in exactly 24 days, told the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday that he will open again to demonstrators historic Mendiola. He said anybody can hold rallies there and on equally historic Plaza Miranda at any time of day or night, as long as they have a permit.

These two places have been the sites of many important—and sometimes violent—rallies in the past. Plaza Miranda was bombed during a *miting de avance* during the Marcos regime and a number of political leaders, including former Senate President Jovito Salonga, were seriously injured. Mendiola was the site of the massacre of farmers by soldiers in a protest rally during the Aquino administration.

President Ramon Magsaysay, when he had to make a decision on a controversial matter, started the query, "Can we defend this at Plaza Miranda?"

* * *

Teachers and students of Jose Abad Santos School in Tondo held their own demonstration last Monday, the first day of school. They were protesting their transfer to new school buildings in the old Namarco compound at the end of Dasmariñas Street, just off Escolta. They don't want to move to the new site because it is far from their homes. They have to take two jeepney rides to get there, whereas they take only one to the old site. Besides, they have to pass through a squatter colony and they are afraid the students would be held up.

Senators Lim and Jamby Madrigal, several Manila congressmen and councilors rushed there early Monday morning because of the protests, attracting media people. I noted that the school buildings were still in very good condition. It seemed such a waste to tear them down.

So why do they want to tear them down? Because a land developer wants to get hold of the three-hectare campus. Megaworld is going to build a shopping mall and multistory condominiums on the site of the school buildings. Megaworld did not even pay cash for the property owned by the city of Manila. According to Lim, the lot is worth P120,000 per sq m.

Instead of cash, Megaworld is paying for the property by giving some of the residential units in the condominium to the city government and by constructing new school buildings in the Namarco compound. Those buildings are now finished.

Lim said the deal, authorized only by a resolution—not an ordinance—by the city council, is grossly disadvantageous to the government because the land is worth much more than the value of the condo units to be turned over to the city government and the new school buildings put together.

Lim said there are reports that the councilors have been promised half a million pesos each to pass the resolution and that all but seven of the 36 councilors voted for the resolution. He added that there are reports that half of the amount (P250,000 each) has already been paid, with the balance to be given once the transaction is completed.

It looks like they won't get the rest of the money because Lim said he would rescind the contract when he becomes mayor. To compensate Megaworld for the school buildings it constructed, the Manila government will buy it and convert it into a hospital for the people of the Tondo-Binondo area.

I think that's fair enough. This should make everybody happy, except of course for some people at City Hall.

* * *

Lim also revealed that the Metropolitan Theater will be repaired and refurbished and made the venue for the revival of the zarzuelas, vaudevilles and stage shows that launched the careers of such superstars as Atang de la Rama, Rogelio dela Rosa, Diosdado Macapagal and Katy de la Cruz. The stage shows during the Japanese Occupation supported many actors and actresses who were made jobless by the closure of the movie studios.

An attempt to revive the Metro was made in the past. It failed because the shows were the same as those being shown at the Cultural Center: concerts of classical music, ballet, highbrow plays.

Whoever will run the new Metro should not imitate the Cultural Center. Leave the highbrow stuff to the Cultural Center. Let the Metro cater to the *masa* by showing zarzuelas, stage shows, vaudevilles and variety shows. They are already a part of our cultural heritage. They are to the Philippines as the opera is to the Italians, the Broadway musical is to the Americans and the Kabuki is to the Japanese. And Palanca Prize-winning plays can be staged there. A play that is not staged is like a beautiful flower that is unseen.

The Metro is right for the *bakya* crowd (the elite can go to the Cultural Center). The Metro is on the jeepney routes, and a station of the Light Rail Transit is nearby. For car owners, there is a parking building at the back.

Lim also said he will open Arroceros Park to the public. During intermissions at the Metro, the audience can go to the park for fresh air and cocktails.

The Metro is owned by the Government Service Insurance System. It has two murals by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo. Lim said there is already a memorandum of agreement between the GSIS and City Hall to refurbish the theater.

Instincts

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I JOIN THE REASONABLE PEOPLE OF THIS country in warmly commending the Supreme Court for doing the commonsensical thing. Such are things in this country today, as I said when the Supreme Court struck down the other onerous impositions of this government, that the most commonsensical actions now take on the aspect of heroic deeds. Of course, I'm still waiting for the most commonsensical, and supremely heroic, deed of all, which is the Supreme Court striking down the most onerous imposition of the Arroyo administration—its existence—by ruling on its legitimacy, or lack of it. But for the nonce, I am thankful for what it has done.

What it has done is throw out the rebellion cases against six lawmakers and four civilians. The Court said trenchantly that the government case was fraught with irregularities and chided Raul Gonzalez in particular for harboring political motives when he filed it. We can forgive the Court not for being trenchant enough. It has an image of sobriety to protect. But anyone who calls Philip Alston a *"muchacho"* of the UN, who laughs at Cory's complaint about her phone being bugged and says she herself is bugging Kris, and suggests that murdered Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell was asking for it by traipsing alone in the wilds of Banaue, harbors more than political motives or irregularities in his brain. That is one very diseased brain, such as it can be called a brain.

Before this, the Supreme Court also ruled against EO 464, GMA's order preventing any public official from telling how she cheated in the elections; CPR, GMA's order preventing the public from protesting her cheating in the elections; and 1017, her order preventing the people from enjoying democracy, which would not have abided her cheating in the elections. And before this, the Supreme Court also ruled against the effort of the ruling party to change a perfectly good Constitution so they could cheat their way out of term limits and allow people who cheat in elections to continue to rule this country.

Not a bad deal all in all. This most recent ruling by the highest court of law, of course, simply upholds the ruling by the highest court of public opinion which long ago exonerated the accused in the rebellion charges, including Danny Lim and several bemedaled military officers who languish in jail on that account. But the court of public opinion differs from the Supreme Court in its reason for finding the accused innocent. It's that rebellion happens only when you take up arms against a duly constituted authority. You take up arms—or withdraw support—from an unduly constituted one, that is not rebellion, that is reason. That is not atrocity, that is justice. That is not a crime against the nation, that is a favor to it.

Gonzalez fumes: "Nobody will be charged anymore. Even if you find 1,000 graves in Leyte, there will be no case because then that will be the imagination of the DOJ."

This comes from the mouth of someone who did not have the eyes to see that while he was accusing Satur Ocampo of a specious crime that took place ages ago while Ocampo was in jail, Jovito Palparan and his boss were decimating journalists and political activists right in front of him. Indeed, this comes from the mouth of someone who did not have the ears to hear the "Hello Garci" tape. Nobody will be charged anymore? Too late to complain.

But for all this, I remain bothered by the way things are. Of course, I'm deeply grateful that the Supreme Court has fallen on the side of Good, Reason and the People, however you choose to call it, these last few years. My worry is not that the Court might abandon us at some time in the future, particularly at crunch time. My worry is that we keep becoming more and more dependent on the Supreme Court to keep law—or justice—alive.

Law is only as good as people are willing to enforce it. It is public expectation that the law will be obeyed, or it is the public resolve that the law will be enforced, that makes law possible. Laws defending democracy are only as good as the democratic instincts of a people are alive and vibrant. Democratic laws do not create democratic instincts, democratic instincts create democratic laws. It's those instincts I worry about.

Did we really need the Supreme Court to tell us how wrong, undemocratic and iniquitous an order was banning government officials from telling the truth about elections? Did we really need the Supreme Court to tell us how selective, indecent and obscene arresting Ocampo was at the height of the campaign for specious complicity in the communist purges ages ago, while the whole world was indicting the government for patent culpability in today's wanton slaughter? Do we really need the Court to tell us how unimaginably ugly and oppressive and insane all the things it has cast like St. Michael into the fires of hell or oblivion are?

The natural reaction of people who live in a democracy, or think they do, is to be violently outraged. The spontaneous reaction of a people who enjoy their rights, or think they do, is to be livid with fury. The instinctive reaction of people who have known freedom all their lives is to damn the people who make the Jonas Burgoses of this world disappear. Those instincts are what make democratic laws possible, not the other way around.

The Supreme Court has done its part. When will we do ours?

* * *

Erratum: It wasn't Rep. Prospero Nograles who said that the First Gentleman smoothened relations between GMA and her generals, it was Rep. Jacinto Paras. Specifically, Paras said FG was GMA's "buffer" and "shield" who quietly ensured military and police support for her during the Garci scandal and its aftermath through backroom channels.

As they say today, my bad.

Acting as if nothing happened

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE FIRST THING THE OPPOSITION DID AFTER it appeared certain that the Genuine Opposition (GO) candidates had won 8-2-2 in the Senate election was to talk with deposed President Joseph Estrada, at his detention home in Tanay, Rizal, about the division of spoils. Up for grabs are the Senate presidency and chairmanship of key committees. From newspaper reports, there was nothing to indicate that the victors, in the flush of triumph, thought of overhauling the national policy agenda beyond just carving up the booty.

The celebration with Estrada was symbolic and symptomatic of the opposition's view of the mandate it received from the people on May 14. When the opposition leaders met at Estrada's rest house, they offered the GO capture of the Senate as a trophy to Estrada and as an acknowledgment of Estrada's view that the election was a referendum on the illegitimacy of his overthrow by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in January 2001 and a vindication of his innocence of plunder charges.

The opposition cannot be more wrong than crediting Estrada for the GO victory in the Senate election. Some of them may like to think the GO team was hand-picked by Estrada. But this was not exactly the case: most of the GO candidates were not identified as dyed-in-the-wool Estrada partisans, and presented themselves as independent-minded persons. The only thread shared by members of the team was that all were anti-Arroyo.

The May election was anything but a rerun of the Estrada-Arroyo political vendetta. That feud was not the central election issue. The voters decided on a number of issues that have emerged to define the character of the Arroyo administration since 2001. The nation has traveled a long distance for the past six years. Consequently, Estrada cannot claim credit for influencing the 8-2-2 Senate election result. Much less is he in a position to call the shots in the allocation of power in the next Senate.

The entire election results—for the Senate, the House and the local posts—have left an unclear mandate for either the administration or the opposition. The mandate is open to several interpretations about what the administration and the opposition have to do in the remaining three years of this government. The mandate is spelled out on two levels: the Senate and House of Representatives.

The results represent a draw. The administration lost control of the Senate, but retained its majority in the House, winning more than 200 seats in the 256-member House, with the opposition winning 35. But this time, the majority coalition is not as largely dominated by Lakas-CMD as the outgoing Congress. Lakas' dominance is threatened by the resurgence of Kampi, the President's own party, which gained 48 seats. These gains have splintered the base of the coalition among Lakas-CMD, Kampi and Eduardo Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), which held around 40 seats.

The May election, in which the President was not up for reelection, was in effect a half-election. Half of the Senate was up for election. The other half of the polls involved the House. For the purpose of reversing the national policy agenda, it is the Senate election outcome that is more critical than the House outcome, and the Senate results reflect more authentically the national mood. Thus, the administration has claimed a fresh vote of confidence on the results of the election for House seats, and the opposition claims a mandate to review and reverse policy on issues on which the opposition perceives the administration has been repudiated by the voters nationwide as reflected by the Senate election results.

In its postmortem of the results, the GO admits to having underestimated the depth and the undercurrent of the voters' unrest with the administration. Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, GO's campaign manager and strategist, told reporters the 8-2-2 result exceeded its expectations. He expected only six GO candidates to win.

The administration was equally stunned by the scale of Team Unity's (TU) defeat. From the nearly complete Comelec official canvass, only two TU candidates (Senators Edgardo Angara and Joker Arroyo) have survived the GO sweep, with Miguel Zubiri struggling to move into the 12th slot with the remaining count of the Mindanao votes. Administration strategists had hoped TU would win from four to five seats.

Both sides failed to plumb the pulse of the nation's discontent and impulses for policy change and reversal.

It is dismaying that neither the opposition, if ever it can find its way into speaking with an alternative policy agenda, nor the government has recognized that the mixed results for both the Senate and House elections require them to review and revise the policy agenda and priorities.

The key areas upon which policy reversal can be made in the Senate are the blue ribbon committee, foreign relations committee, finance and economic committees, defense committee, and justice and human rights. These are the committees that defined the issues on which the contest for control of the Senate was fought and decided.

It is equally dismaying that the administration has not shown any sign of being chastened or humbled by the Senate election results. There's not a hint of a Cabinet change to signal its readiness to make a fresh start after a devastating defeat. The worst thing the administration can do is to stonewall on the status quo—as if nothing happened on May 14.

'Graciosa'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"CAN WE LOOK AT THESE TWO UNITS?" I ASKED THE cell phone vendor. I was in Greenhills with a friend and each of us had spotted a unit that looked interesting.

The clerk frowned and said, "*Isa-isa lang* (Let's do it one at a time)." Fair enough, I thought, maybe she'd had people running off with the phones, but I felt her voice could have been more congenial.

So, she pulled out one unit to show my friend, and after he was through, took out the other one for me to look at. I wasn't really that interested, partly thrown off by her demeanor, so I quickly returned the unit to her with a "*Salamat.*"

She scowled and muttered, "*Sayang lang oras ko* (What a waste of time)."

My friend watched me nervously, knowing how I feel about impertinence, but I figured, it's the end of a long day and I'll just let it go at that.

Bad business

"*Graciosa,*" I fumed on the way home and my friend, who's younger, asked what it meant. "Graciousness," I translated, only to get another blank look. And I realized, that's it, we're raising a new generation of ungracious Filipinos.

You see it all around you: in the way people push you aside as they try to get through a crowd, clerks who toss your change back at you, people who answer the phone with "*Ano 'yan!*", bureaucrats who won't look at you as you transact business. All this is going to be disastrous, considering how our economy depends so much on graciousness. We have millions of Filipinos working overseas, many in countries where graciousness is essential. And locally, we want to promote tourism, call centers, retirement villages, yet most younger Filipinos (and I bet quite a few older ones as well) have no sense of graciousness.

I'm talking about more than the good manners and right conduct norms we picked up in school. It's also more than the artificial "good morning, sir/ma'am" that everyone seems to be doing now in malls and stores, done so mechanically they might as well be greeting a school of hermaphrodite milkfish.

Graciousness means the little extras that go a long way, the "thank you" and the smile, even for the most routine work done; the "please," the "*po*," the "*palihug*" (in the Visayas) that go with every request—again no matter how small. It's making an effort to move closer to a customer to hand over an object, rather than hurling it. It's hospitality—plus, a way of saying "You're special," serving fresh fruit juice instead of some soft drink or powdered drink. It's also the *pinipig* you add to the chocolate—thank you, Tita Gilda, who whips up the richest *tskolate eh*.

Class

We tend to think that graciousness comes with being upper class. Not quite. Graciousness is very much alive in the most remote of our villages, with the poorest of the poor in the boondocks (*bundok*), where people welcome you into their homes, give you their best room (or, for very poor families, their best *banig* or sleeping mat), slaughter their only chicken or pig and when you try to stop them explaining you're vegetarian and can't bear to see animals slaughtered, they take out their one and only can of *carne norte* (corned beef). Graciousness means going out of your way to help, and that's literal in many parts of the country. Ask for instructions to someone's home and you automatically have a guide accompanying you to that place, even if it's five or six mountains away. And no, they're not going to ask you for a tip.

So, why are we losing this graciousness? Partly it's urban life eating away into our soul. To survive in cities, we think we need to be tough and brusque.

But I'm realizing, too, the rot goes back to when Filipinos began to internalize the values of our feudal lords. Among their peers, landlords observed proper etiquette and had some degree of graciousness, but toward lesser mortals, which was 95 percent of the Philippine population, it was pure and unadulterated arrogance.

I had friends who worked as flight attendants in Philippine Airlines and who told me how, on flights to and from Bacolod and Iloilo, they had to deal with wannabe hacenderos, who would lug in heavy bags which they would drop on the floor. Never a "please," never a "*palihug*" from the haughty passengers, the attendants were expected to know that they should lift the bags and put them into the overhead bin—and say thank you for the privilege.

You see it, too, with domestic helpers, who have mastered, through imitation, the imperial tones and habits of their employers. I worry in particular about the *yayas* (nannies), who pass on this class snobbery to the young children they're caring for. When their wards grow up to be insolent brats, the parents wonder why they became that way.

Eventually, that lack of graciousness, combined with class snobbery, spread like a virus, transforming us into paragons of rudeness. And the poorer one is, the more one gets the brunt of this ungraciousness. You see it in the malls: the lower the income group they cater to, the more ungracious the sales clerks, bored, overworked and suspicious of their customers because they're not rich and might steal the goods.

Like the wind

I try to understand when someone is ungracious because of a long day's work, but, whenever possible, I also take it up with them—graciously, sometimes with a bit of teasing—because I know that if I don't call their attention to their lapses, they would eventually offend someone less tolerant, and that would cost them their job.

I've found that graciousness can be useful even with the mean and the vicious because it rattles them, gets them even more nervous as they wonder if you're preparing to take action against them—very graciously, of course. And sometimes they're right.

"*Xing ru feng,*" my Chinese meditation teacher recently exhorted our class. Move like the wind. To demonstrate, she took a few steps to emphasize the importance of being light-footed, then opened and shut a door ever so carefully. "It's more than politeness," she explained, "it's respecting others, being conscious that you don't end up disturbing others." Graciousness includes the gentle handling of any object, an expression of our respect for its value.

Society ritualizes graciousness so it can be taught, eventually becoming embodied, meaning it becomes part of our body, reflected in our speech, our gait, our facial expressions, our hand movements. It's the way, too, all our movements come together to give us what we call in Filipino "*dating,*" the impact we have on people. It's never stiff, as when we "behave" only because we have to. Neither is it contrived, as when politicians perform. Never directed, never scripted, graciousness touches people because it emanates from a choreography of the heart.

Not just a grudge fight

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"SO, YOU'RE IN FOR THE FIGHT OF YOUR life!" I teased Cebu Representative-elect Pablo Garcia during a recent dinner.

"No, it's (Speaker) Joe de Venecia who's in for the fight of his life," interjected Garcia's son Winston, president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

When we met with him in Cebu last April, Pabling Garcia said that even if he was returning to politics by running anew for a House seat, he was taking it easy because "all the mayors in my district are with us anyway." Indeed, the last campaign would seem like a walk for the political Garcia family of Cebu. Not only did the "old man Garcia" handily win his congressional seat, so did his son Pablo John in his first congressional campaign. More significant, his daughter Gwen won her second term as governor with a winning margin that, she says, "is unprecedented in Cebu history."

But what makes the outcome of the last elections even sweeter for the Garcias is the way their party—their "One Cebu" belongs to the President's Kampi—carried the entire province even in the senatorial elections. Going against the national trend, Cebu went for Team Unity, voting in a majority of the administration candidates and giving the most number of votes to Joker Arroyo, followed by Cebuano-speaking Prospero Pichay. Popular Genuine Opposition candidates Loren Legarda and Chiz Escudero, who came out No. 1 and 2 in the national count, could land only in seventh and eighth place, while John Osmeña of the storied Cebuano political family, couldn't even make it to the Top 12.

"I told my mayors that I would not tolerate even 12th place for Osmeña," said the governor of her family's long-time nemesis. The mayors had no choice but to follow, shares Pablo John, because Gwen is known among her mayors as "the tiger of the capitol."

* * *

AND yet, despite their vindication in the last polls and the satisfying results, why is Pablo Garcia, who has served as congressman and governor of his province, now contesting the speakership of the House?

"We have our issues against De Venecia," the older Garcia explains, while his son Winston seems more than willing to go into details about this "grudge match." He cites the many times the Speaker and stalwart of Lakas, to which the Garcias previously owed their allegiance, walked all over their alliance and supported other candidates, including the son of Sonny Osmeña during Gwen's first run for governor.

"But we're also contesting the speakership for considerations of principles," adds Pablo John. There is a feeling, apparently, especially within the business community, that De Venecia is the source of political instability in the country. This may sound rather far-fetched, but as the Garcia siblings contend, the Speaker may have caused the defeat of the administration Senate lineup with his stubborn and ill-advised pursuit of Charter change, "and we all know why he's pursuing that." It's also Pablo Garcia's belief that "the Speaker has been using the threat of impeachment as a way to make the President beholden to him."

* * *

OTHER members of the House, though, have spoken out against what seems to them a farcical fight for the post of Speaker. Since House tradition dictates that whoever loses in the challenge for speakership becomes the minority floor leader, it would mean giving both the House leadership and the leadership of the opposition to the biggest pro-administration parties.

The situation, says opposition Representative-elect Rufus Rodriguez, is "highly anomalous," since with only 35 members in the House, "there is no way (the 'genuine' opposition) can muster enough votes" to place second place in the race for speaker. Rodriguez called for a caucus of all pro-administration parties to decide on a single candidate for speaker among them. The opposition, he said, would do likewise, and thereby ensure that the post of minority floor leader would indeed belong to the real opposition and minority in the House.

Still, the way the Garcia father and siblings were talking that evening, it seemed clear they weren't in any mood to simply take part in a "moro-moro" for speaker just to block the opposition from taking any leadership role in the House. And yet, also judging from their talk, it seems their loyalty to President Arroyo is beyond question. A "run-off" between their loyalists and the supporters of De Venecia for the speakership before a final contest for the post thus seems most reasonable and would serve the ends of democracy—the essence of which is giving a voice and a choice to everyone—all the better.

* * *

IT'S obvious that the race for House speaker has energized Pabling Garcia, even if it would seem he has earned a well-deserved retirement from politics by now.

But Winston, the third-born but eldest boy of the eight Garcia siblings, says they encouraged their father to run again for Congress "because when he finished his last term as governor, he seemed to lose steam."

The older Garcia laughs at this, but nods in agreement. He has more than enough reason, after all, to enjoy this current political season. All's well in the world of the Garcias. In contrast to her very slim margin of victory in 2004, Gwen is sweeping back into office enjoying an unquestionable mandate and free to pursue her own agenda for governance. Pablo John is making his debut on the national stage, a debut that will undoubtedly be enhanced should his father win the speakership. And Winston? Well, as his anecdotes indicate, he's riding high on the vaunted economic achievements of the Arroyo government and, as part of the President's economic team, he's certainly aglow with a sense of accomplishment.

A broader perspective of history

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

"DISTRESSING" IS THE ONLY WORD TO DEscribe what I feel each time I receive yet another invitation to address teachers on the topic, "How to make history interesting." The theme supplied says a lot about the person doing the inviting than the subject matter because history is interesting. If students are bored in history class, it is probably the fault of the teacher, or the textbook, or both.

More distressing is the fact that some teachers want to change the way they deliver history in the classroom but are not allowed to do so by their superiors. Students suffer the same fate: one person I met flunked an exam and another lost a quiz bee because they used material in my books and columns rather than the standard textbook. I also receive e-mail from expatriate Filipinos who try to keep in touch with their roots through history. A group of Fil-Ams, who were probably raised on simplistic or outdated textbook history their parents brought with them four decades ago, were upset over the columns last month on elections during the time of our Founding Fathers.

I want to share an e-mail sent by Aniway Lomeda (nee Duhaylungsod), who is taking up graduate studies in chemistry, from Texas. She wrote:

"I just recently read a couple of your earlier essays this May on the Tejeros Convention and the anomalous conduct of the first Philippine elections. I find it disquieting that there is a general acceptance of the validity of those events leading to the founding of our republic. Thinking back to my undergraduate Kasaysayang Filipino, I realize that I am fortunate to have been presented with a broader perspective of both sides of the story, as one might say. But much of what I discovered about Philippine history (being a chemistry major) I actually assimilated outside of the traditional classroom. I learned the context of Bonifacio's 'tantrum,' and later, how social classes played into the struggle for power and eventually into the founding of the Republic.

"So my picture of Philippine history is not exactly what the curriculum prescribes, hence I feel a little more enlightened than the general trend you described in the articles. But as a parent, I realize that it is my consciousness of history that will become my son's basis for his appreciation of our history, and here is where it becomes so important to build a more accurate national consciousness of history. I have seen how it plays out with my eldest child, who just finished kindergarten this year, and I would like to share this incident with you.

"I recall one topic at school that required the students to fill up a page about someone who had been a hero in their community or country. It was a good opportunity to appreciate the diversity of his class since the school's population is about 45 percent white, 35 percent Asian, 10 percent black and 10 percent Hispanic (or whatever the politically correct terms are!). Now for several days leading to the homework, he had been coming home with stories of Presidents Washington and Lincoln etc., so I decided that Bonifacio would be our hero of choice. We proceeded to talk, in the simplest of terms, about the Spanish occupation and oppression leading up to the Revolution, of which our hero Bonifacio was the Ama. So all that was pretty much textbook stuff.

"Then comes his question: 'Then did he become president too after the Revolution, like General Washington?' *Oo nga naman*, because they were both fathers of their respective revolutions, it was a logical, analogous step in his mind, but unfortunately *anak*, non sequitur. Nanay simply says, 'He died before there became a Philippine republic.' And he says sadly, 'Oh, then someone must have shot him in the war.' And I reply, just as sadly, 'Yes, in a different kind of battle, *anak*.' I thought about how confusing it would be for him to hear that it was a fellow Filipino who killed our hero, and how it was very likely that he was defrauded of a seat in the leadership of the Filipinos. So I simply answer, 'Yes.'

"But I tell him silently, 'Rest assured, *anak*, when you are a bit older, I will tell you the rest. I will not let you down, I will not rob you of your history. For how can one learn from his past if he does not know of it? How can we hope for a brighter future if we keep ourselves in the dark about the past?'

"So I applaud you, Sir, for going against the tide and taking pains to re-educate us Filipinos on our own history. I hope that your readers will also realize how timely this is in the context of our present-day elections and nation-building.

"On a personal note, I have always enjoyed your writings and how you manage to engage my mind in historical discourse when I am a natural scientist by training. Although we haven't met, you actually autographed a copy of 'Rizal Without the Overcoat' for me as a student, through my mother, Levy, whom you met at some conference, I think. I will try my best to keep up with your column; I thank you for providing us with a link to our heritage and homeland."

I often wonder whether it is all right to present a different view of history that is both confusing or disturbing. Readers' responses have given me the answer.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

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'Kotongan' at PAL terminal

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE ROLE OF the policemen loitering around the exit area of Philippine Airlines' terminal? As we were about to exit the place, two cops took our luggage claim stubs and pretended to inspect the luggage. One moved closer and asked for a "tip." We ignored him. Meanwhile, the real PAL staff just looked on with indifference and did nothing.

When we managed to move on closer to the exit, another set of PAL staff in uniform asked for our claim stubs (again) to compare with the stubs on our luggage. They asked us to go back to the cops and claim our stubs which the cops kept in their possession. This happened May 9 at 3 p.m. upon our arrival from Honolulu, PR 101. The PAL staff and the cops assigned around that time in that area should be investigated and should be made to answer for the "extra services" they were extending to the passengers.

Also on a domestic flight to Aklan, I handed the lady at the terminal fee counter a P1,000-bill to pay for four boarding passes for four passengers. She gave me back P200. She stapled all the tickets together with the boarding passes in one bundle. As we went through the X-ray inspection area, the people there inspected our boarding passes, too. But when we were boarded, a man came running to us demanding another P200 because there were only three, not four, ticket stubs.

We didn't have the chance to complain because the plane was ready to leave. Perfect scenario. Ignoring the missing ticket stub until the last minute so we can't complain to the lady who made P200 by issuing us one ticket less and to the man who made P200 for getting paid without giving us a ticket.

How many more are being victimized by this scam and how much money are the people behind this racket making every day? They must be all in it, for how else could they ignore the missing stub at the X-ray and boarding area?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Don't you ever notice just how too many inspectors, porters, cops, janitors and officials are hanging around inside the PAL terminal? Any one of them can practically ask to see your travel papers and you won't notice the difference if he's a PAL officer or a janitor.

It's a perfect setting for disorder and "kotongan" and PAL doesn't seem to be doing anything about this problem. I am not the first victim. I have heard and read complaints about this problem before. Hello, who's in charge there?

—RIGGY JONES,
riggy3@walla.com

Main cause of decline in English proficiency among Filipino youth

MOST EDUCATORS KNOW—AND there are studies that support this—that one must know his/her mother tongue in the early years before he/she should try learning to speak in any other language.

The medium of instruction in our schools may be a factor in developing our students' and graduates' proficiency in English. I believe, however, that the main reason for the decline in English proficiency among our young is that they spend more time watching TV or playing video games than reading.

I cannot quote actual studies here, but from observation, I think our youth, in general, read less than their elders. Most young people today squander precious time absorbing trash from television, sitting passively in front of the "box." I challenge parents to help stop or reverse this downward trend, and to encourage our children to read and grow intellectually.

I challenge our scholars to make a study on the relationship between reading and the box, on one hand, and achievement, on the other; and to tell the nation about their findings. I challenge our lawmakers to act on this problem.

Let's think up of ways to promote reading and to limit television viewing among the young.

—LOELLA ESCANTILLA-LAPAT,
loella_l@yahoo.com

Tattered flags

I HOPE THE OFFICIALS OF THE government agencies holding offices in the Atrium Building along Makati Avenue, Makati City, will take time to look up the front porch of the building and see the dismal and shameful condition of the two Philippine flags hanging on two poles.

It appears that both flags were directly hit by Typhoon "Milenyo" last year.

It is a shame that no one from any of the government agencies in that building has bothered to replace whatever remains of the flags hanging there. Is this an obvious indication of our lack of patriotism?

—TOMAS TUASON,
tomas_tuason@yahoo.com

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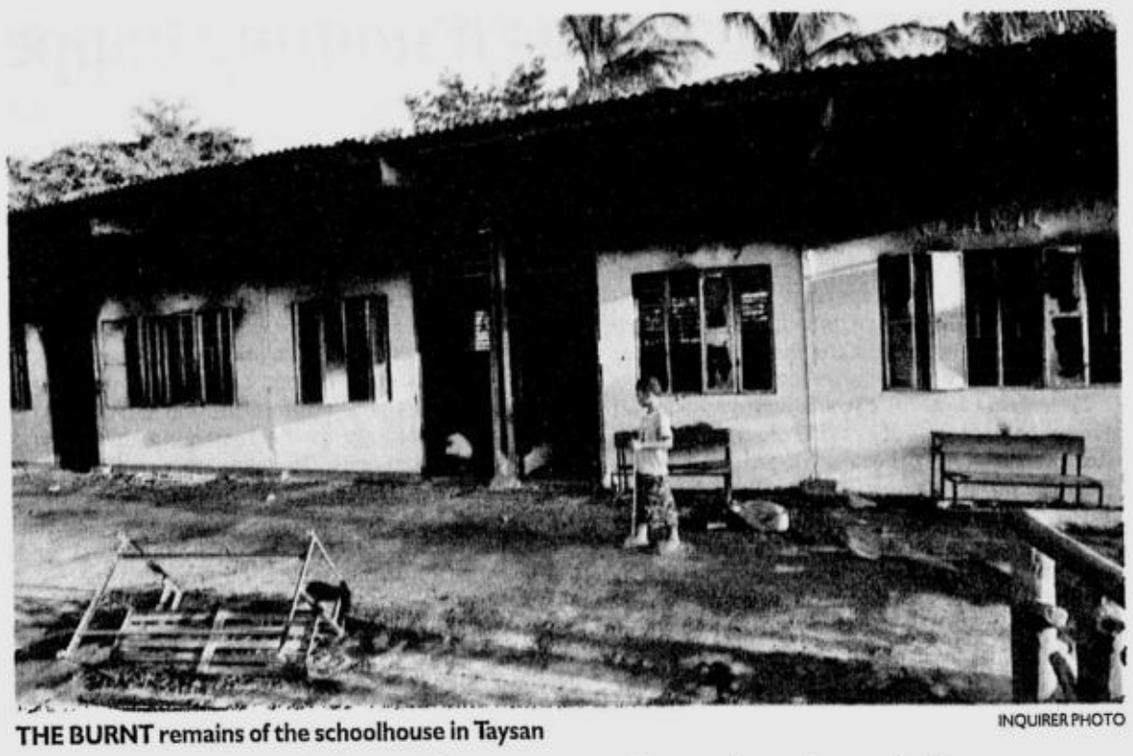

THE BURNT remains of the schoolhouse in Taysan INQUIRER PHOTO

Teachers should not be exposed to election violence

THAT TEACHERS WOULD rather skip poll duties is hardly news. So why am I (as many others) still raising this issue, after the elections?

Because, with every election, serving as election inspector is becoming more and more a dangerous task; because the clamor to relieve the teachers from such a task is growing louder and louder.

The burning of ballot boxes and a schoolhouse in Taysan, Batangas, where a teacher and two poll watchers died in that incident, proved all the more this clamor to be most justified.

Like most Filipinos, I am saddened and alarmed by this incident. I join the call for the immediate resolution of this incident. The perpetrators of this dastardly act—obviously crooked politicians and hired goons—must be arrested and brought to justice.

—FRED L. BAGBAGEN,
3/F Rudel Bldg. V.,
Lower Mabini cor.
Diego Silang Streets,
Baguio City 2600

Bolante remembered in 2007 campaign-spending spree

INQUIRER'S MAY 26 EDITORIAL which asserted that the institution of the Senate "matters, precisely because it plays a key role in our democracy" implies that the Senate, of all our institutions, and our senators are the true vanguards of democracy. I find this view quite disturbing.

True, a number of high-profile cases involving graft and—to a large extent, the alleged assault by Malacañang on our civil liberties—had been denounced by senators, individually and/or collectively, in their chamber. That senators act as a counterweight to the executive is hardly surprising at all, given the true function of this branch of government.

But we should ask ourselves: Is this all of what is left of Philippine politics? What about the politics of governance and the accountability of the Senate to play a key role in bringing about stability and economic progress in our country? Are the senators the true representatives of our people?

Political columnist and UP Political Science professor Alex Magno is right in saying that every senator is bereft of party identification and is too impervious to party discipline; they see themselves as above the occupant in "mere Malacañang" such that the Senate has become a dysfunctional unit and we are forced to deal with each of the senator who sees himself as an autonomous power.

Members of the opposition are patting themselves on the back for their imminent landslide victory. But for what reason? Remember the Joc-Joc Bolante fertilizer scam? Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo let loose a bird to do nasty things. We had elected superman-senators with their big catch nets. But the bird flew away before they knew it.

It's is sad to think that the fertilizer scam was hatched to "fuel" GMA's campaign machinery in 2004; that's P728 million gone bye-bye, and the combined presidential and senatorial elections campaign spending in 2004 amounted to a staggering P1.2 billion.

In the 2007 elections, the overspending was never more evident. So what else is new? An oppositionist Senate battling the executive, and the people's money being wasted in their endless attempt to cut each other's throat.

—FRANK CARLOS,
fpcarlos@yahoo.com

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Revive Charter change as country's only hope

THE 2007 MID-TERM ELECTIONS SHOWED that the administration is strong at the local, congressional and provincial levels but weak at the national level. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's senatorial candidates have clearly been repudiated. Note, too, the alarming expanding military representation in the Senate: Rodolfo Biazon, Panfilo Lacson, Gregorio Honasan and Antonio Trillanes—former soldiers and anti-GMA all, hence, the proclivity for a military coup. Combined with the Estrada-backed candidates hankering for people power and concentrated in oppositionist Manila, we should expect political upheavals in the immediate future.

With the loss of Pampanga's governorship to a priest who ran against the GMA-backed wife of a wealthy *jueteng* lord, the end of the Espinosa's five-decade rule of Masbate and the end of many political dynasties, we can say that the electorate generally wants some meaningful changes in our political structure. Thus, the lingering challenge to shift to a parliamentary form of government, which the Senate and political dynasties oppose.

We can no longer further postpone the shift to a parliamentary system. Before the 2010 elections, the country needs to be united and healed of the festering wounds brought about by the endless bickering in a presidential system, a form of government that has failed us and our country, now dubbed as the most corrupt in Asia. It is time for all well-meaning Filipinos to pause, think and do something to heal the country's divisive, economic, social and political wounds.

The new Congress is morally, critically and historically bound to rewrite our Constitution. Let us harness the energy and vision of the new Congress in amending our Constitution. It will be an enlightening experience for Filipinos to work together as a people, to pull together for the common good and set aside political ambitions—the points of contention and the cause of our division as a people.

With the shift to a parliamentary system, a system preferred by over 114 countries worldwide, we might yet see that we are a country so blessed with so much bounty from the Almighty; that in peace and unity, no barrier can deter the indomitable spirit of the Filipino people.

The parliamentary system is the only hope of our country for political sanity, peace, unity and progress.

—FRUCTUOSO SUZARA,
executive director,
Social Policy Advocacy, 15 Charleyville St.,
White Plains, Quezon City

Killing the hospitals softly with a foolish law

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID AND WRITTEN about the exodus of health care professionals to other countries (also known as "brain drain"). The INQUIRER has reported on the likes of Dr. Elmer Jacinto, the medical board topnotcher who chose to work as a nurse in the United States; and on Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan's study on how many physicians have chosen the same path, and how some hospitals are closing down for lack of doctors and nurses to man them.

It was everyone's hope that, given all the hype the media gave the problem, lawmakers might take notice and step in to remedy the situation. But, alas, three senators, Manuel Villar, Pia Cayetano and Serge Osmeña, decided to further add insult to injury by passing a law allowing patients to "check out" of hospitals by just writing out a promissory note, meaning, without actually paying their bills. It penalizes private hospitals, including their administrators, that violate this law.

Are they out of their minds? Where would the hospitals get money to buy medicines and supplies, and pay their staff in case the majority of the patients decide not to pay up? Most of these institutions even have to borrow money from banks to upgrade their facilities and capabilities. How would they pay their loans now?

Private hospital administrators frown on this bill, saying that, on the average, only one out of 10 patients return to pay their bills; some of them even report bogus addresses. In these hospitals, it is the practice to ask the patient, prior to admission whether he could afford to stay there, or would opt to be referred to a government hospital for further treatment in case he foresees financial difficulties.

What would now stop a patient from choosing a suite in a private hospital, say, St. Luke's or Makati Medical, instead of lining up in a crowded state hospital? After all, he just has to issue a promissory note; and as far as I know, promissory notes (unlike bouncing checks) are not a legal basis for filing an estafa case. But even if it were so, the time and cost of litigation alone would be too much for the hospitals.

What's next? Will they allow hungry people to eat at any restaurant and simply submit a promissory note? Or better yet, why not allow homeless folks to check in at any apartment or hotel and, come check out time, just sign a promissory note? After all, food and shelter, like health, are also basic needs.

Some hospital owners are suggesting a hospital holiday in protest of this law. The Department of Health says that it has yet to come up with exact guidelines on how to implement the law and will hold dialogues with hospital owners before finalizing the guidelines.

Well, I have a suggestion: Allow patients to leave hospitals with promissory notes, but if they don't pay up within a week, charge their bills automatically to the pork barrel of the senators; if there is no longer enough pork barrel, charge the bills to the personal accounts of Villar, Cayetano and Osmeña.

—NICHOLAS GONZALES,
nmsgmd2@yahoo.com

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Mindanao troops on high terror alert

A SOLDIER on election duty keeps watch at the Isabela-Lamitan highway. His role will revert to fighting terrorism as a result of a US alert. JULIE ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

KIDAPAWAN CITY—GOVERNMENT SECURITY forces are bracing for a possible wave of terror attacks after the United States and Australia warned that al-Qaida-affiliated militants were planning to bomb bus terminals and public markets in Mindanao.

Policemen and soldiers have tightened security in and out of the city, putting up choke points and alerting troops following the US' terror plot reports.

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Eastern Mindanao Command, told the INQUIRER that Basit Usman, an alleged Jemaah Islamiyah member said to be behind the recent bombings in Central Mindanao, facilitated the training on bomb making of fresh recruits in the village of Linantangan in Mamasapano, Maguindanao, recently.

"Their training went on for eight days starting May 18," Cabangbang said.

Usman is on Washington's list of terrorists and carries a bounty of $50,000 (P2.4 million).

Usman is said to be a former member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) but the secessionist group has disowned him. He is being blamed for the bomb attacks that killed eight people and wounded dozens of others, including that in Makilala town in North Cotabato in October last year.

In a warning message on June 2, the United States said it received information that the bombings would likely be here and nearby Makilala in the next several days.

The warning, posted on the US Embassy webpage, said the Americans had information about the possible bomb attacks.

"The embassy has information that terrorists may be planning to carry out bombings at bus terminals and public market places in Kidapawan (City) and Makilala in North Cotabato, Mindanao over the next several days," it said.

"US citizens should exercise extreme caution in Central Mindanao ... US citizens living and working in Central Mindanao are urged to reassess their personal security and to keep a low profile, and should avoid public gathering places," it added.

The Australian government, on the other hand, said possible targets included places of worship, restaurants, shopping malls, hotels, hostels, guesthouses, bars or clubs in major population centers, including but not limited to the cities of Davao, Kidapawan, Koronadal, Cagayan de Oro, General Santos, Cotabato and Pagadian, and the towns of Carmen, Isulan and Maganoy.

A day after the warning was issued, government troops foiled a bomb attack when a powerful improvised explosive device left inside a bus was discovered by civilians and later defused by experts at a public terminal in Talitay, Maguindanao.

The bomb was made up of about a kilogram of incendiary powder placed inside a pitcher that was packed with jagged metal fragments and rigged with a battery-operated, time-delay blasting device.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said military commanders were directed to check information that Zulkifli bin Abdul Hir Maruwan, also known as Commander Marohom—allegedly a key operative in the JI cell responsible for the 2002 Bali bomb attack in which 202 people died—was hiding in Central Mindanao.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said over 100 rebel troops and spies had been deployed to monitor and arrest Zulkifli.

Zulkifli was last spotted in marshy areas in the border between Maguindanao and North Cotabato, where the MILF has forces, he said.

"Our troops were directed to catch him dead or alive," he said.

Zulkifli allegedly heads the Kumpulun Mujahidin Malaysia terrorist group and is a member of the JI's central command. *Jeoffrey Maitem and Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

Ifugao names forest park after slain US volunteer

BAGUIO CITY—IFUGAO OFFICIALS were silent throughout the spectacle that accompanied the murder of US Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell in Banaue town in April.

But the province finally made its sentiments clearer to Campbell's fellow Peace Corps volunteers on Sunday when the community of Barangay Pula in Asipulo, Ifugao, dedicated 12 hectares of forest land to Campbell, a former journalist, said Dustin Butler, 24, a volunteer assigned to the province.

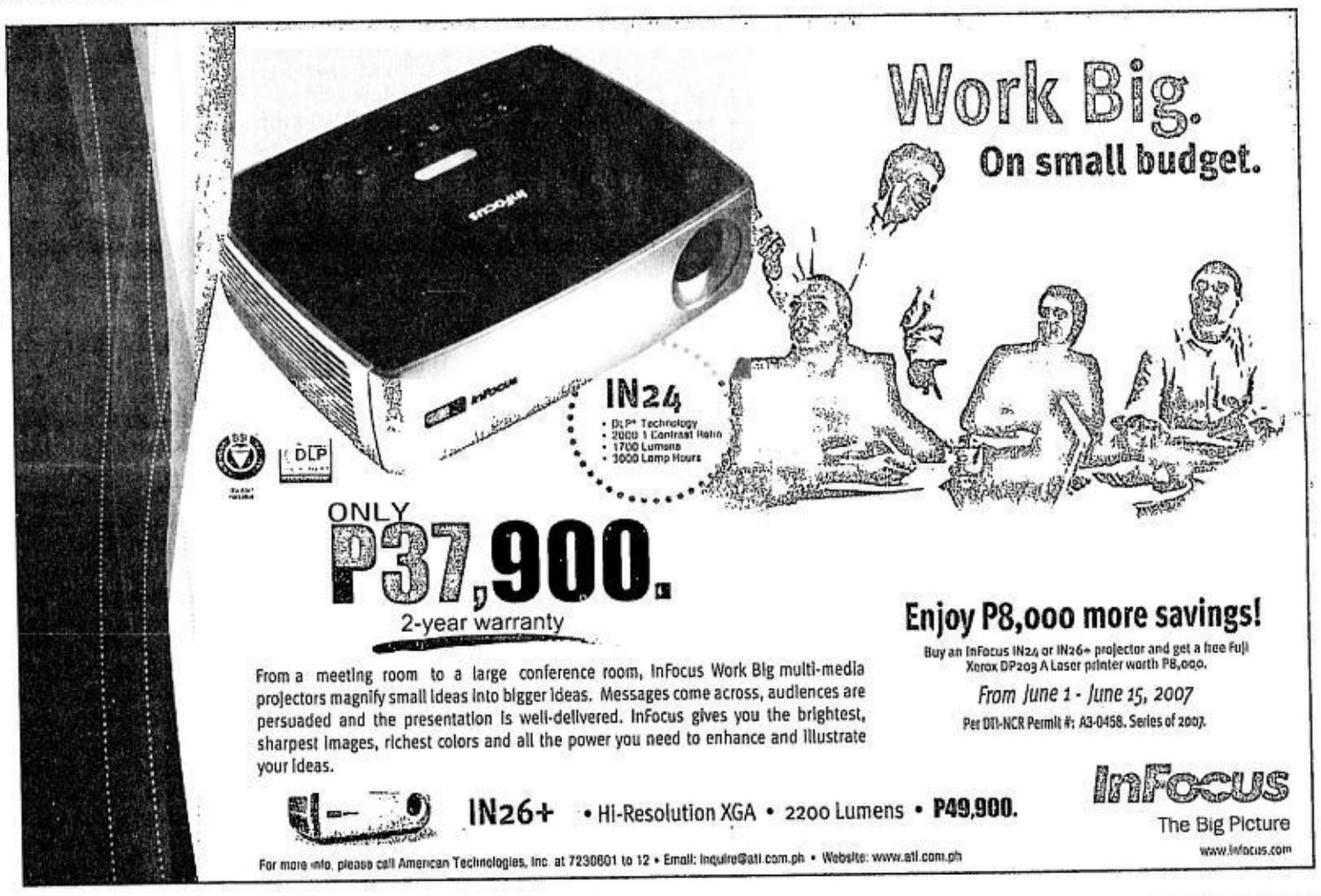
About 25 Peace Corps volunteers, their Filipino coordinators and their staff converged in Barangay Pula with Asipulo officials and members to celebrate Environment Day in Campbell's honor. Environment Day is officially celebrated on June 5.

Butler said the residents adopted a concept he drew up about forging a livelihood project in Campbell's honor, which would also help feed the villages.

The people responded by donating the land they would develop into an agro-forestry park, said Roy Dimayuga, provincial program coordinator of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The town is piloting a UNFPA-supported social development and population management program that was started in 2005 and will last until 2009. The program has made the "Campbell Park" a key feature of the program, Dimayuga told the INQUIRER.

He said it was the community's way of making up for Campbell's death. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



Guimaras folk warned on fake payment letter

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—AN INTERNATIONAL agency in charge of settling claims for oil spill damages has warned about a fake letter supposedly informing a second batch of claimants that payment was ready.

The International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund and local officials issued the warning to Guimaras residents.

"The IOPC said the letter is a fake and that the signature was a forgery," said Rafael Coscolluela, presidential assistant for Western Visayas and head of the regional task force Solar I Oil Spill, quoting Patrick Joseph, IOPC claims manager.

Coscolluela said the IOPC claims office in Guimaras got hold of a copy of the letter sent to barangay leaders on the island after they tried to verify the notice.

The one-page letter dated May 18 informed the barangay chairs that the payment for the second batch of claimants for pollution damages resulting from the August 2006 oil spill would be released starting this month.

The letter, purportedly signed by IOPC Deputy Director Joe Nichols, instructed the claimants to bring valid identification cards and residence certificates.

Coscolluela said that Joseph had informed him that no payments were possible this month because the IOPC was still validating more than 100,000 claim forms submitted by the second batch.

The IOPC has finished examining the forms but have not started validating the claims, said Coscolluela. He said that only 2,600 forms were found to have been duly accomplished while the rest were set aside because they lacked information.

The IOPC earlier raised alarm over the large number of claimants in the second batch.

It said the number of claimants, including the 11,400 already paid, was already 80 percent of the total population of Guimaras.

The oil spill could not have affected such a large number of residents, it said.

Coscolluela said he could not yet explain the proliferation of the fake letter and who was responsible for it.

"What could be the motive and who will benefit from this?" he asked.

Last year, the IOPC paid around P118.5 million to more than 11,000 residents of Guimaras whose livelihoods were harmed after the Solar I sank on Aug. 12, spilling 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel it was transporting for Petron from Bataan to Zamboanga. The victims each got from P4,800 to P32,000.

The IOPC also paid P2,790,614 to 819 residents of coastal villages of Iloilo City and P57 million to some 11,000 claimants of Iloilo province.

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The Short-term loan Penalty Condonation Program is again extended to June 30, 2007

We are again extending the availment of the SSS short-term loan penalty condonation program until June 30, 2007.

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- Members of delinquent cooperatives under the Member's Assistance for the Development of Entrepreneurship (MADE) Program.

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You can also download an application form from our web site: www.sss.gov.ph

For further details, please contact the Member Loans Program Management Department: Tel. No. 920-6401 locals 5131 to 5135

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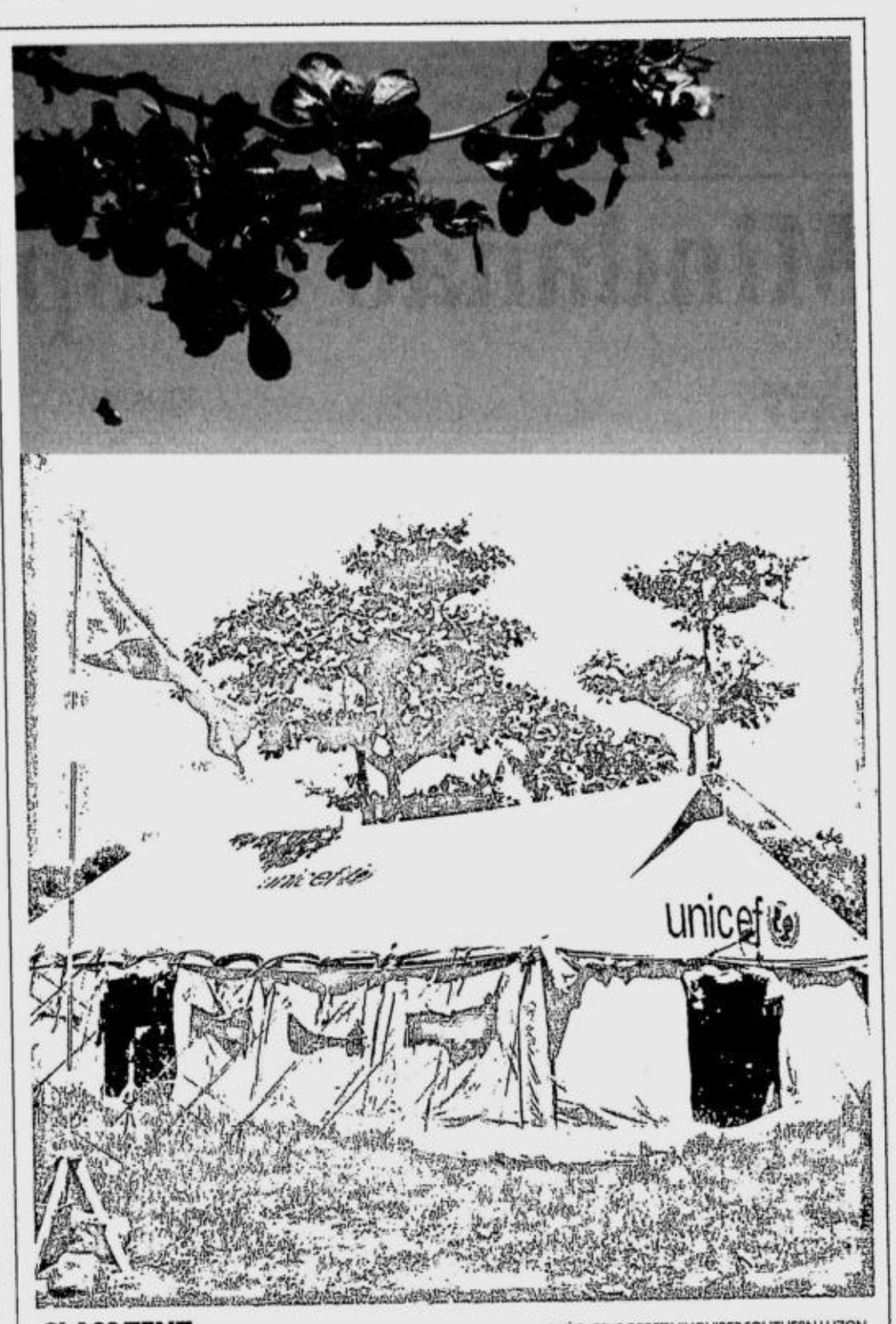

CLASS TENT NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

This tent serves as a classroom for 120 students of the Maipon Elementary School, which was relocated in Barangay Travesia, Guinobatan town in Albay, when half of the old school was buried by mudflow from Mayon Volcano at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming" late last year. Both students and teachers are complaining of too much heat and lack of facilities.

More students enrolled but few classrooms, teachers

COTABATO CITY—Education officials in Central Mindanao and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao have confirmed the soaring number of enrollees this year, a problem compounded by the lack of classrooms, textbooks and teachers.

In Central Mindanao, which consists of the provinces of North and South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and the cities of General Santos, Koronadal, Tacurong, Kidapawan and Cotabato, officials said the enrollment figure rose by five percent compared to last year's.

STUDENTS at the Jose Bastida Elementary School in Dumoy, Davao City, help clean up the school grounds in line with the week-long "Brigada Eskwela" initiated by the Department of Education. BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) reported that as of May 29, 2007, the ARMM alone had 564,803 elementary students and Central Mindanao, 548,743.

For the same period, the ARMM has 13,354 teachers while Central Mindanao has 14,210. Elementary classrooms in the ARMM numbered 11,736 while in Central Mindanao, there are 13,524.

"It is statistically impossible that children will feel at ease or comfortable inside a very limited classroom, most of them coming from grade one," said Luz Almeda, Department of Education director for Central Mindanao.

She said that because of the increase in the number of students, a teacher has to attend to 60 students or even more per class.

The DepEd has put the ideal ratio of one teacher for every 30 students in a class.

Udtog Kawit, acting ARMM education secretary, shared Almeda's predicament when he raised other enrollment woes, such as the lack of textbooks and teachers.

"This has been a perennial problem in the DepEd every opening of school year, despite reminders from the regional level," Kawit said.

Kawit said the national government must anticipate these yearly educational needs of schoolchildren.

Both officials expressed readiness in implementing the DepEd policy on the integration of Islamic teaching in public schools.

"This is now the alternative learning system (not only for in but) for out-of-school Muslim youths who may not have the opportunity to go to college," said Monaros Boradsing, education undersecretary for Muslim affairs, who met on Monday with state teachers here.

"They can enroll where they can learn Arabic and Islamic values education while they are also taught English," she said.

"Oplan Balik Paaralan" has been launched Monday by the Central Mindanao police.

Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio Jr., regional police director, said more policemen had been assigned to secure school premises. *Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao with a report from Chona Galang, Inquirer Research*

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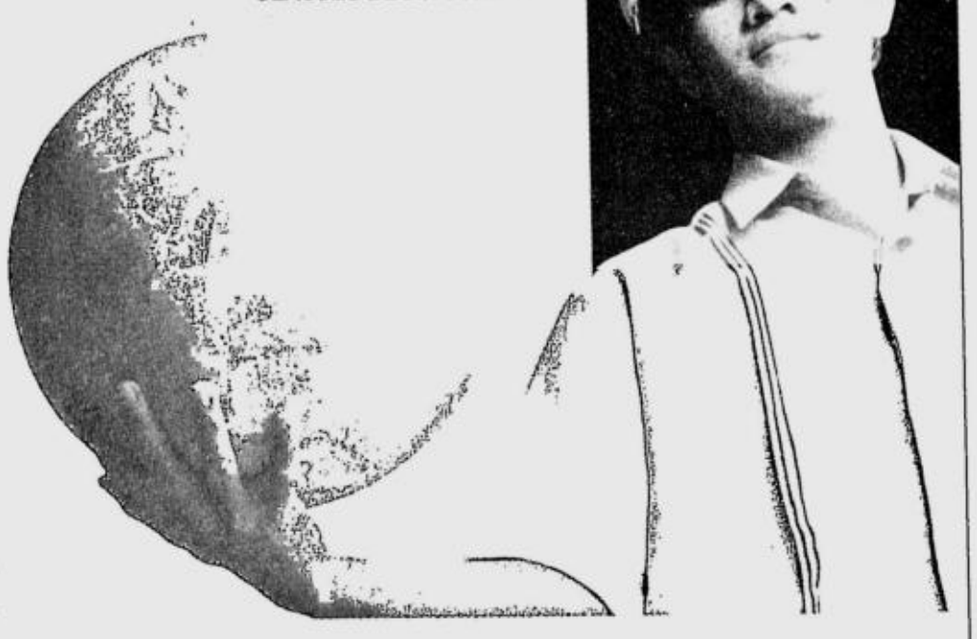

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Journalist killer tagged high risk

ZAMBOANGA CITY—JAIL AUTHORITIES see the convicted killer of Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio as a high-risk prisoner, putting him in a cell occupied by members of the local terror group Abu Sayyaf.

There will be no more karaoke and videoke machine operations and tennis games, which he did inside the Pagadian City Jail, for convicted journalist killer Guillermo Wapile as he was transferred to this city a week ago.

Supt. Victor Borres, warden of the Zamboanga City Reformatory Center, said Wapile would end up playing board games inside his cell because "domino and chess are the only games allowed."

Borres said Wapile had been placed under tight watch and all his visitors were being closely scrutinized.

Insp. Belsie Agustin, chief of operations and spokesperson of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Western Mindanao, said Wapile was a "high-risk and high-profile inmate," which prompted them to make his transfer confidential "to ensure that he will not escape or groups might snatch him from us."

"It's all for security reasons," Agustin said.

Well-trained

"Wapile's case is not just a typical commission of index crimes, it has characters on his case being a former well-trained police officer and his reported association with notorious criminal gangs," Agustin added.

Wapile was transferred under heavy guard to the Zamboanga City Reformatory Center on May 19. He was immediately detained at Cell No. 1, sharing it with 60 other high-risk and high-profile criminals, like suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, murderers and rapists.

The transfer, Agustin said, was based on an order from the Regional Trial Court Branch 19 in Cebu City and request from Insp. Elmer Gregorio, warden of the Pagadian Jail.

Wapile is not allowed to mingle with anyone outside his cell, Borres said. He is also not included in any of the facility's programs and projects like the recently held skills training for inmates.

"He'll stay here for safekeeping, he will soon be transferred to another facility (Muntinlupa)," Borres said. *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

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INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Pangasinan language is alive and kicking

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Dagupan City

WITH ITS SPEAKERS DEcreasing by the day, many consider the Pangasinan language to be dying. But a local historian is struggling to keep the language alive by compiling native words and publishing these in a dictionary.

Emiliano "Mel" Jovellanos, 70, has published the fourth edition of the Pangasinan-English, English-Pangasinan language dictionary. The compilation has 20,000 entries, four times the number of words when he published the first edition in 2002.

Jovellanos said he feels bad when he hears people say the Pangasinan language is dying.

"It's alive, and this dictionary is a proof that it is," he said. He also cited a study of the provincial government that 51 percent of Pangasinenses speak the language, as opposed to 47 percent who speak Ilocano and the rest, dialects like Bolinao.

Jovellanos' labor of love to preserve Pangasinan words started more than 20 years ago while working as chief of staff of former Information Minister Gregorio Cendaña in 1985.

He informed Cendaña, a Pangasinense, of his dream to publish the dictionary and Cendaña readily supported the plan.

Jovellanos started researching and collecting native words, poring through available materials written in Pangasinan like the Bible, prayer books, novenas, novels of Juan Villamil and Maria Magsanoc, and copies of Tunong, a pre-World War II paper that emphasized literary works in Pangasinan.

He combed the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., and spent hours in the Filipiniana section of the National Library, the archives of the University of Santo Tomas and the Dominican Library in Manaoag town.

"I was always ready with a pen and a notebook, jotting every new word I met," Jovellanos said.

After filling up about a dozen notebooks with Pangasinan words, the painstaking work of arranging them alphabetically followed.

THE COVER of the Pangasinan-English, English-Pangasinan Language Dictionary depicts the Pangasinenses' character—hardworking, resourceful, resolute, patient.

'This language is beautiful and rich in vocabulary'

EMILIANO Jovellanos autographs a copy of the Pangasinan-English, English-Pangasinan Language Dictionary.
YOLANDA SOTELO-FUERTES

Long hand

"I did everything by long hand," he said.

The publication of the dictionary, however, was stalled as his responsibilities as the municipal administrator of Pozorrubio town, and later as councilor, had to be prioritized.

Finally, the dictionary's first edition came out in 2002. The book became a "hit" of sorts, especially with local officials who made it a part of their towns' "official gifts" to visitors. Local officials also bring copies whenever they go abroad as *pasalubong* (gifts) to Pangasinenses there.

He said the dictionary's fifth edition would be printed in the United States this November when the Benigno Aldana National High School holds a reunion for its alumni living in the US and Canada.

"They clamor for a copy but the dictionary is heavy and the freight is expensive, so we decided to just print it there," he said.

The dictionary has 15 pages of easy lessons in spoken Pangasinan, like greetings, signs and public notices, days and time, numbers and questions, and general expressions.

There are also poems in Pangasinan, including a version of National Hero Jose Rizal's "Mi Ultimo Adios."

Jovellanos said his father, Jose Jovellanos, the municipal president (mayor) of Dagupan from 1919 to 1925, translated the poem to Pangasinan on his deathbed in 1946.

Beautiful and rich

He said poets and novelists in Pangasinan write expressively because the language is "beautiful and rich in vocabulary."

In the dictionary's introduction, he cited two examples of how rich the language is: "The English word for ambition is expressed in Pangasinan in so many words: *piaet, ogagep, tamitam, gunaet, posapos, pilalek, pigipig, pirawat* and *tindek*. If in English one is crazy, in Pangasinan one is 13 times more crazy: *atapis, atiwel, ambagel, ambagtit, kulang-kulang, atorik, angkampis, atiris, lokloko, akustil, bobolanen, sulok-sulok*, and *alintaweng*."

The dictionary's publication has opened more doors to Jovellanos. He was named president of the Jose Tamayo Foundation, after its founder, Antonio Tamayo, owner of the University of Perpetual Help, learned of his work to preserve the language. The foundation aims to preserve the Pangasinan culture and arts, among other things.

Feliz Perez: No world-weary traveler

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

FOR A 21-YEAR-OLD STUDENT, Feliz Gabriela Soledad Perez, known as "Fifi," has seen much of the world, but she still retains the eyes of an innocent.

In her first solo exhibition entitled "Napuwing" at the Café by the Ruins in Baguio City, ongoing until June 13, she presents 30 photographs of nature, children and animals taken in her hometown Baguio, in Sagada, Mt. Province and in Kapangan, Benguet, where she spent two weeks doing research as a social anthropology major of the University of the Philippines Baguio, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and California in the United States.

Her memories of traveling with her family go back to when she was 6 years old exploring Thailand. With mother Adelaida, sister Padma, cousins or grandfather, Capt. Roberto Lim, formerly a pilot of Philippine Airlines, she has been through most of Europe, the US, Vietnam and other countries.

In the beginning she used to lug a heavy Nikon F2, then switched to digital cameras (Olympus Camedia 5050 and Panasonic Lumix DMC-F27) when the cost of film became unaffordable.

Abroad or in different parts of Luzon, she would visit tourist spots but "look out for things not everybody sees. I take photos of what tourists aren't paying attention to," she said.

She figured out photography on her own after her father, film and television director Butch, handed her a camera when she was a junior at the University of Baguio Science High School studying photojournalism. He sometimes gives suggestions on lighting and angles.

FELIZ Perez with some of her photographs at Cafe by the Ruins.
ELIZABETH LOLARGA

For her first show he served as curator while a photographer uncle, Rafael Castillo of the Camera Club of the Philippines, was her adviser. Her photos are in editions of five.

Perez uses her camera as her notebook. She said, "If I want to take note of something like a sign in a restaurant that I find funny, I just take a picture. But I also carry a notebook with me everywhere."

During the summer that just ended she worked at the café, seating people and giving them their bills. She drew up the menu for the Valentine poetry reading of the Baguio Writers Group entitled "Love and Other Edibles."

For her next project she and her best friend Lia Llamado are compiling memories of the café and recipes for a cookbook that they will coauthor.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Regional Office 10
Cagayan de Oro

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The *National Food Authority, Region 10* through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites Truckers/Hauler Owners/Operators/Contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project: **Contract for the Supply of 2007 Trucking/Hauling Services**

Location: **Cagayan de Oro City Pier Disport to NFA-Cagayan de Oro City/Region 10 Owned/Leased Warehouses and Marawi/Lanao del Sur**

Brief Description: Contract involves the hauling of bags of NFA rice from Cagayan de Oro City Pier Disport to NFA-Cagayan de Oro/Region 10 owned/leased warehouses and GID Marawi/Lanao del Sur.

CONTRACT NO.	DESTINATION PROVINCE/ WAREHOUSE	ESTIMATED VOLUME IN BAGS OF 50 kg.	MINIMUM NUMBER OF TRUCKS REQUIRED	MINIMUM NET LOAD CAPACITY REQUIRED (bags)	RATE PER BAG OF 50 kg (Php)	APPROVED BUDGET CEILING (Php)	BID DOCS PER LOT PER CONTRACT (Php)
7-1b	CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY PIER DISPORT TO GID PATAG, GID BALOY NFA-CAGAYAN DE ORO/ REGION 10/ LEASED WAREHOUSES	900,000 bags at 100,000 bags per lot (a total of 9 lots)	8 trucks per lot	4,000 bags per lot	4.51	4,059,000.00	2,500.00
7-9b	LANAO DEL SUR GID MARAWI	100,000	6	3,000	22.28	2,228,000.00	5,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding and have key personnel and equipment (owned) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	ADDRESS	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	2F, NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	May 29-June 8, 2007	8:00 AM - 5.00 PM working days
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	2F, NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	June 14, 2007	1:30 PM
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements & Bid Documents	2F, NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	June 26, 2007	1:30 PM
4. Opening of Bids	2F, NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	June 26, 2007	1:35 PM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable/non-transferrable amount for bid documents per Contract to the Cashier of the National Food Authority – Cagayan de Oro City.

The **National Food Authority, Region 10** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The **National Food Authority, Region 10** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the Bidders.

(Sgd.) CAMILO D. MAGTRAYO
BAC Chairman

(PDI – May 29 & June 6, 2007)

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Purified Drinking Water Including Provision, Installation and Maintenance of Water Dispenser/Drinking Facilities for Y2007-2008

The **Pag-IBIG FUND**, through its **Bids and Awards Committee for Goods & Services (BAC-GS)**, intends to apply the sum of **(P1,165,520.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the supply and delivery of 29,138 (5 gallon) containers purified drinking water including provision, installation and maintenance of water dispenser/drinking facilities for Y2007-2008. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The **Pag-IBIG FUND** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Purified Drinking Water including Provision, Installation and Maintenance of Water Dispenser/Drinking Facilities for Y2007 to December 2008. Delivery of the goods is required within **7 calendar days** from receipt of Notice of Award. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Pag-IBIG FUND and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Procurement Division, General Services Department, Room 704, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City starting June 6, 2007 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the Procurement Division, General Services Department, Pag-IBIG FUND, 7th Floor, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City starting June 6, 2007 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) only. The method of payment will be in the form of cash or manager's/cashier's check payable to Pag-IBIG FUND. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The **Pag-IBIG FUND** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 13, 2007 at 2:00 in the afternoon at the Arnel Taduran Hall, Room 602, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered on June 25, 2007 at the Arnel Taduran Hall, Room 602, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City at 9:00 in the morning. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in an amount equivalent to a percentage of the ABC to bid in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check and two and a half percent (2 1/2%) of the ABC in the form of surety bond. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be held on June 25, 2007 at 9:00 in the morning at the Arnel Taduran Hall, Room 602, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The **Pag-IBIG FUND** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Messrs. Wilfrido Nacito S. Reyes and Jose Maria M. Diaz at 8114262, 8945815 or visit our Corporate Website at **http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph** or e-mail us at **gsd@pagibigfund.gov.ph.**

(Sgd.) **EMMA LINDA B. FARIA**
Senior Vice President, Technical Support
Chair, BAC-Goods and Services

By:

(Sgd.) **DELIA L. BERNARDO**
Vice President, Administration Group
Vice-Chair, BAC-Goods and Services

(PDI–June 6, 2007)

New subsidy plan ...

From page A1

criminate against private school students coming from indigent families but also cause the eventual closure of 1,970 participating private schools across the country," the ad says.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus scoffs at such claims, saying that, in fact, the plea was made by schools charging tuition of over P12,000 and they could hardly be classified as needy.

Increase in budget

"By the skin of my teeth, I have already gotten an increase in the budget," says Lapus, raising the subsidy from P4,000 to P6,000 this year because students sent to private high schools were dropping out.

"They are ostracized. They have no pocket money. They have no uniforms. They have no textbooks," says Lapus.

"I ask now, what is the counterpart of the private schools which are living on 40 percent of their revenues from the government. What are they contributing to the students?"

The ESC was implemented under a law passed in 1989 to decongest public high schools after the government's free secondary education sparked massive transfers from privately operated facilities.

This was done after the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) conducted a pilot project in Samar, Leyte and Cotabato in school year 1982-83 and the result essentially became the ESC.

ESC financing came from the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (Gastpe) which, in the last school year, wangled P2 billion, including about P500 million for the EVS pilot project.

Private high schools had accounted for 60 percent of total enrollment in the 1970s. By the late 1980s, when the free high school education program came into effect, the figure had dropped further to 20 percent. A general economic crunch also triggered the exodus to public schools.

Way out of tight spot

Without the resources to deal with overcrowding, the DepEd went into service contracting, paying for surplus facilities in private high schools to accommodate Grade 6 graduates.

It was a way out of a tight spot.

Instead of building schools, putting in facilities and hiring teachers, the government adopted the ESC.

Each student got a subsidy that began with P900. By last year, the subsidy had gone up to P4,000. Experts say that getting the private sector to join the ESC had not been easy, especially after tuition had breached the P20,000 mark with the median rate at P7,000.

The Davao schools expressed disappointment at the EVS guidelines, including limiting to 40 the ESC freshmen grantees per participating school, disqualifying schools charging more than P12,000, excluding private elementary school graduates as beneficiaries, and allowing participation only of private schools that are close to red- or black-coded public high schools, meaning those in impoverished areas.

Why ESC appeals

Former Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus outlines in a paper why the ESC appeals.

"For the EVS, [the] DepEd identified the schools qualified to receive the voucher certificates. Any school in the 'red zone,' areas where public high schools lacked classrooms or teachers, could participate in the EVS," says De Jesus.

"In the schools eventually selected, through a process that remains somewhat vague, the principals selected 22 students belonging to the upper 50 percent of the graduating elementary class to receive the certificates."

On the other hand, in the ESC, parents had to apply and commit to cover the gap between the subsidy and the school's tuition, says De Jesus. School committees evaluate the applicants' financial standing and academic ability.

Schools in the "red zone" had to pass the qualification standards of the FAPE, which administers the project for Gastpe grants. The FAPE also conducted training programs for ESC schools, assisted them in developing learning materials and monitored student performance.

Reinventing the wheel

"Taking money away from the ESC for a voucher system essentially duplicating what it is already doing is an exercise in reinventing the wheel," says De Jesus.

The DepEd is determined to push ahead with the phaseout of the ESC, whose obvious appeal is in the flexibility it allows the administration in deciding where to distribute the vouchers.

It could serve the function of a PhilHealth card, says one critic, referring to the government initiative backed by P3 billion in funds from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which were farmed out during the fraud-wracked presidential election in 2004.

Fait accompli

Mariano Piamonte, a member of the State Assistance Council chaired by the education secretary, says he received a "referendum" memo from the panel in March asking him to sign the adoption of voucher system and the phaseout of the contracting program.

He refused to sign the document, pointing out that he was being served a fait accompli. It was done without the benefit of debate in the council which is supposed to be convened at least once a year, he says.

The ECS is mandated by law enacted by Congress, Piamonte says. If it is changed by executive fiat, he is concerned that a new President will easily change its ground rules.

"We want the department to go back to the old system," says Piamonte, who is also executive director of the Catholic Education Association of the Philippines. He says the Coordinating Council for Private Schools, the umbrella association for 3,000 schools belonging to various groups, is mobilizing to oppose the voucher system.

Lapus skates questions on Piamonte's criticism. He admits that the mechanism could still be fine-tuned and emphasized that the more important thing was that with the increase in funding there will be more beneficiaries.

For now, the outlook doesn't look too good for private school administrators.

Lim gives back forest park to public

By Allison W. Lopez

NATURE LOVERS NOW HAVE A reason to go back to a park by the Pasig River in Manila.

In celebration of World Environment Day yesterday, Sen. Alfredo Lim, the mayor-elect of Manila, vowed to reopen the Arroceros Forest Park once he assumes office.

Lim said that come July 1, everyone would be welcome to enjoy the forest park.

The forest park was closed to the public after outgoing mayor Lito Atienza had it converted into the City Schools Division office.

"We are happy that Senator Lim is back as the mayor of Manila," said Winner Foundation president Regina Paterno.

The environmental group, which was designated caretaker of the 2.2-ha forest park in a 1993 memorandum of agreement with then Mayor Lim, protested the park's conversion and filed a preliminary injunction case at the Manila Regional Trial Court. The case is awaiting resolution.

"The digging of trenches in Arroceros Forest Park caused the destruction of vegetation, damaging endangered plants and felling of trees," Winner Foundation said in its petition.

The group was carrying out a 15-year development plan when the Manila's engineering office began diggings on March 31, 2005, for the new building of public school teachers.

Paterno told the INQUIRER that she had already spoken with the new mayor three times, and that he had promised that the foundation would be "getting the park back."

"After June 30, we will begin the rehabilitation of the forest. We have started to source out indigenous trees to be planted in the park," she said.

Paterno said about 187 fully grown trees, thousands of younger trees and ornamental plants were cut to give way for the new structure.

The forest park was home to 8,000 trees (61 species), shrubs and ornamental plants as of 1992, based on information from the Manila Seedling Bank, Paterno said.

It was also a haven for at least 10 bird species, according to Haribon and the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines.

"We're so relieved that we have a new mayor who's for the environment," said Paterno of Lim. "Most of the trees in Manila were planted during his time."

A CHALLENGE TO CONGRESS: Catherine Untalan, Miss Earth Water-2006, and Jean Harn, Miss Philippines Earth 2007, urge the incoming 14th Congress to act first and fast on climate change concerns during a press conference at the Batasang Pambansa where they also distributed seedlings. JOAN BONDOC

Volunteers to plant 20M trees July to Nov.

From page A1

dation Inc. to plant 20 million trees in denuded forests and watersheds from July to November.

The project, according to Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, was an attempt to regain "a lost part" of the country's forest cover, now down to less than 10 million hectares from 21 million hectares in 1900.

The launch, Reyes said, "is intended to call the attention of all Filipinos on the pressing need not only to preserve but to restore a natural habitat, which has been irresponsibly and incalculably damaged, almost beyond repair."

Forest cover growing

Reyes said that increasing forest cover, thanks to people-oriented forestry projects and adoption of community-based forest management, was picking up. The forest cover grew from 5.4 million hectares in 1987 to 7.2 million hectares in 2004.

But he acknowledged that there was still a long way to go. "Our reforestation projection of 7.8 million hectares until 2008 under the Green Philippines Program is encouraging," he said.

The DENR and Green Army will raise 20 million saplings of indigenous trees from several sources, including the department's nurseries, and make these available for planting in denuded forests, watersheds, public parks and along national highways.

Green Army Foundation is a multisectoral coalition of environmental, civil society, religious, youth and business groups, and academics.

Match Singapore

With the massive tree-planting, Edgar Chua, Green Army president, said the Philippines would soon match Singapore's greenery.

"Whenever I go to Singapore, I always marvel at how green the place is. And I'm filled with envy that such a small place can be so green ... Singapore is very near the equator, and yet somehow it feels cooler than the Philippines. [That's because] trees are all over the place," he said.

In his speech at the main lobby of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Chua said he was sorry for the Philippines.

"It's endowed with so much trees, so much natural resources, and yet, it's nowhere near a city like Singapore," said Chua, Shell Philippines chair.

But if 20 million Filipinos plant a tree each, then that's "more trees than what Singapore has now," said Chua.

Green highways

The project is actually a continuation of the reforestation component of the Green Philippine Highways, a project of the DENR, Green Army and Mirant Foundation that planted 800,000 trees along 4,181 kilometers of roads last year.

With the simultaneous planting of 800,000 trees, the project set a new Guinness World Record of the "Most Trees Planted Simultaneously."

Since only 45 percent of the trees survived, the DENR planted tens of thousands more trees.

But like in the Green Philippine Highways project, the DENR and the Green Army need volunteers for the "Trees for Life" project.

Volunteer needed

Chua said volunteers could sign up for the tree-planting by logging on to the Green Army's website www.greenarmynetwork.net.

"Each and everyone of us can do something in our own small way," he said. "This is an opportunity for each and everyone of us to rise to the occasion, and do something in our own small way to make a difference. A small difference, multiplied by a large number, becomes a large difference."

At the launch, attended by former Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun, Odette Alcantara of Mother Earth, and Rene Azurin and John Kaw of Green Army, among others, the DENR and Green Army signed a memorandum of agreement to undertake the project.

A presentation of 20 seedlings to 20 children from the Philippine Institute of Quezon City and the Samahang Kabataang Kristiyano followed to mark the start of the environmental mission.

Artwork

The launch was done against the backdrop of an artwork by Junyee. The artwork consists of some 10,000 pieces of *angud*, a term used by the people of Aurora and Quezon provinces to describe the end part of logs that are cut and discarded during illegal logging operations.

The *angud* were spread throughout the Cultural Center of the Philippines' front lawn.

"This alludes to a graveyard of mute witnesses to a continuing crime against nature," said CCP president Nestor Jardin in an earlier interview.

"These pieces of wood represent the denudation of our forests that in turn causes mudslides and land erosion, bringing tragic consequences that made headlines recently," Jardin said.

The *angud* were all connected by red nylon cords of different length and thickness "representing the broken ecology of a rain forest," he said.

"Each *angud* represents one tree. *Angud* is what is left of the devastation that we all have to suffer. So with this backdrop, we hope that this artwork takes an added significance and make people act now to do something good for the environment," he said. *With a report from Joanne Gonzales*

Group to tap people power to push education reforms

From page A1

have to turn our advocacy into votes, among other things," says Teresita "Ging" Deles, former presidential adviser on the peace process who is now the INCITEGov's managing trustee.

"The advocacy is, you cannot just be concentrating on developing a good agenda and then bringing it around. You have to become a political force," says Deles, one of the 10 members of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet who resigned in July 2005 at the height of allegations that she cheated in the May 2004 elections.

Deles' organization has drafted a framework to empower the public in carrying the education issue in local governments, Congress and polling precincts.

"We have left politics to the politicians that reformists have not meddled with it—in fact, they've stayed away from politics for fear of dirtying their hands. And if we are citizens who want to be able to demand things from our government, we have to engage in politics," Deles told the INQUIRER following a discussion on the framework in a forum INCITEGov organized with the Mirant Philippines Foundation.

The reform approach was a result of INCITEGov's research which endeavored to create a framework "that will relate democratic politics with the practice of good governance so that society can be made to perform at a level that is sufficient to attain development outcomes," the organization says.

Dutch funding

The research, started in June 2006 through funding from The Netherlands Embassy, tackled the areas of national political leadership and institution building, security and peace, fiscal reform and social protection, under which education was a sub-focal area of study.

"What INCITEGov is saying is it's not enough to keep on shouting that this is the reform that you want. You have to study the entire context of this reform in light of the governance and the politics of that," Deles says.

There had been issues successfully lobbied—the movement for clean air and solid waste management, among others—but the push stopped and fell short in assuring implementation, says Mario Taguiwalo, INCITEGov trustee.

Boom and bust

"What's hard here is when we've used issues for politics, it's not really been serious or vigorous. What you get is a slogan, but what's the program?" Deles says.

"All our reforms have been boom and bust. You think you get some movements and then it's always reversed. So if you really want sustainable reform, you really want to connect the dots of development outcome, good governance, and democratic politics," she says.

Taguiwalo says instituting changes in the education system "requires political machinery," which, in turn, could be influenced by a critical mass pushing for reforms.

He believes the movement can fill what he calls the "missing political options" in pursuing education reforms—"influencing election of political champions of education reform, demonstrating political clout of organized proeducation communities through mass action or electoral strength, sustained and organized lobbying for and monitoring education priorities, and declared policy agenda driving support or opposition from education supporters."

Jump-start

To jump-start the movement, such proeducation constituency could begin with identifying a specific cause, for instance, pushing for an increase in government subsidy for education and the assurance that public schools would indeed receive the fund.

"You could galvanize many people around that. Then, when you already have a hold on the people on that issue, they will start making demands for quality. Hence, the community becomes empowered because it was their advocacy that raised government allocation for schools," Taguiwalo says.

He enumerates three sectors that could follow the framework and start the national proeducation movement:

- Established groups engaged in pushing for education reform which "can begin thinking about how they can adopt policy advocacies.
- Overseas Filipino workers, their families and "the better of our community who are already the beneficiaries of a good education."
- The youth, including young professionals, and those in college who have "the most potential to become active during elections."

"Once they begin gathering strength, they can select potential candidates, endorse potential candidates, or they can launch candidacies. Here, we need to be partisan," Taguiwalo says.

Constituency

He says the proeducation constituency could gain ground similar to the way church groups are courted to support politicians during elections.

Deles adds: "You want to support the buildup of parties that really stand for positions. You force the parties to take a position."

Hence, to protect the movement from being used as a campaign tool and forgotten after the winners are proclaimed, Taguiwalo says the bloc will be as active in making its supported politicians accountable for their promises.

"If you know that this will be a political force up to the future, if you do not deliver in the next three years, you're out ... You must make sure you're honest because we are in a position to punish you if you do not abide by your agreement," he says.

Great danger

Taguiwalo recognizes that mobilizing such a constituency will take time, but the INCITEGov's framework will be a start.

Deles believes starting now would be perfect timing. "The crisis of education and the crisis of democracy are bearing down on us," she says.

She says instituting reforms in education is urgent as the country is "in a period of great danger."

"We know that if democracy is endangered, our education is further endangered because authoritarian rule doesn't like people who can challenge it, people who can articulate. They would prefer those who can be fooled," Deles says.

GMA in Fatima thanks Our Lady for Mike A's cure

From page A1

At the neo-classical style shrine, Ms Arroyo attended a special Mass and thanked the Virgin Mary for the "miraculous healing" of her husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, from a highly risky open heart surgery.

She was given a tour of the shrine built on the site of Mary's apparitions to the child Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto in 1917, and visited by four million pilgrims a year.

"You're the first Philippine president to make a pilgrimage to the Fatima," shrine rector Rev. Fr. Luciano Guerra said during a welcome ceremony.

Ms Arroyo was given gifts, including the Book of the Fatima, the official medal of the Our Lady of Fatima and a rosary.

She and her delegation were taken to the Exhibit Hall, where gifts offered by pilgrims over the years—such as wedding gowns, jerseys and jewelry—as well as the Crown of Fatima were displayed.

Ms Arroyo flew to Portugal after a visit to the Vatican and a meeting with Pope Benedict XVI, who showed his keen sense of political developments in the Philippines, asking her about her relationship with Congress and the peace and order situation in Mindanao.

Ms Arroyo told reporters that part of the third secret of Fatima was the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II, who often went to the Fatima. She said the Pope put the bullet taken off his body on a hole in the Fatima crown.

"It was providential. There was a hole that was exactly the diameter of the bullet," she said.

At the shrine, 113 km from Lisbon, Ms Arroyo attended a special Mass for her at the Chapel of the Apparitions. Guerra presided over the Mass and prayed for the Philippines.

The exact site of the apparitions was marked by a marble pillar on which a glass-encased statue of the Virgin Mary was placed.

Later, Ms Arroyo toured the village of Aljustrel, where the three children lived, and drank water from a well in Loca do Anjo, where the children received the first and third visits from the "Angel of Peace."

Ms Arroyo then had dinner with shrine administrative officials.

Sabrosa Mayor Jose Manuel de Carvalh Marques came to Fatima on learning that Ms Arroyo was coming. Sabrosa was the birthplace of Ferdinand Magellan.

Ms Arroyo said Marques wanted to establish relations with Cebu City.

In a talk with reporters covering her visits to Italy and Portugal, Ms Arroyo admitted she came out of her 10-minute private meeting with the Pope with a big smile.

"He's very supportive, let's put it that way," Ms Arroyo said, referring to her "faith-based governance" that she added could be a model for other Catholic countries.

"He didn't open the subject about the elections, he talked about how is my relationship with Congress. I said it's good, we just had elections. In the Senate, as it was and will always be 24 separate republics but in the House, my majority was enhanced," Ms Arroyo told reporters over breakfast at the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisboa where she stayed during her two-day stop in Portugal.

She said the Pope told her: "That's good because you will be able to do more of what you want to do."

'He knows a lot'

Asked why the Pope was interested in her relationship with Congress, Ms Arroyo said: "I can't say why. He knows a lot about what's happening in the Philippines."

Ms Arroyo's allies have expressed elation at the big majority of administration supporters in the House that would rule out a fresh impeachment bid against her in the remaining three years of her term.

Ms Arroyo said she expected the new Senate to be independent-minded.

HALLOWED GROUND: A nun acts as guide to Ms Arroyo during her tour of the shine of Our Lady of Fatima in central Portugal. She is being shown the grave sites of Lucia and Jacinta, two of the children to whom Our Lady made a series of appearances in 1917. AP

Told that the senatorial count appears to be 8-2-2 in favor of the opposition, the President said: "The Senate has always been made up of 24 separate republics. So what is important is to try to work with all parties concerned so we can push forward the things that our country needs."

Asked if she would talk with the new senators, she said: "I have not thought about that."

In Manila, Team Unity senatorial candidate Juan Miguel Zubiri said yesterday that Ms Arroyo was "exasperated" over the outcome of the senatorial elections and decried the failure of local government units to deliver at least five TU candidates to the Senate.

The Bukidnon representative said Ms Arroyo unburdened herself during a meeting in Malacañang last Saturday before she left for Rome.

"She felt a bit bad because she thought at the very least, the local government units or the machinery would deliver five senators to the Magic 12," Zubiri, speaking in Filipino, told a small group of reporters.

He said that, in many cases, administration mayoralty and gubernatorial candidates "thought only of (their) survival and no longer campaigned for the TU candidates. So Ma'am felt bad."

Disappointed, Arroyo said she would just pray and "seek peace spiritually" in Rome, Zubiri said.

Zubiri pointed to the perceived rift between Lakas-CMD and Kampi and said: "Before the elections, we took pride in saying that 90 percent or 80 percent of the country had no opposition bets ... Yes, there were no opposition bets but there were four administration bets fighting each other so the result was the same. What happened was no one campaigned for us."

Compliments

In her talk with reporters in Lisbon, Ms Arroyo said the Pope opened their meeting with compliments about the economic progress under her leadership.

"I told him that yes, our economic growth rate is very good," she said.

She said she told the Pope that her administration had been able to reduce the Philippine poverty rate by 1 percent a year and was looking forward to meeting the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating poverty by 2015.

She told the Pope that her administration was "working very hard with the Church for the preferential option for the poor."

"He's very happy about our public policy and that it can be a model, that you can follow the precepts of the Church in public policy and still the economy is doing well," she said.

The President said the Pope inquired about the peace and order situation in Mindanao and she discussed her government's "soft and hard power" approach to dealing with the insurgency region.

Papal visit

Ms Arroyo said the discussions also touched on human rights in the context of the abolition of the death penalty in the Philippines and the peace process in Mindanao.

Asked about a possible papal visit to the Philippines, Ms Arroyo said: "He says he wants to visit the Philippines but as to when (there is no word yet)."

The President invited the Pope to visit the Philippines during her first meeting with him at the Vatican in June last year.

"He loves the Philippines because we are the most devout (Catholic country) and we follow the precepts of the Church, and the Philippines and Italy are very religious," she said.

Ms Arroyo said that earlier at St. Peter's Basilica on Monday after the canonization rites for four new saints the Pope told her he knew about the many Filipinos working in Italy.

Opportunity for prayer

"I told him Italy is a favored destination for Filipinos because of the Catholic faith. They feel at home in Italy," she said.

Ms Arroyo described her trip to the Vatican and Fatima as "an opportunity for prayer, thanksgiving and petition and to renew the spiritual strength, moral courage and faith-based governance."

"It's a big privilege for me that he received me twice in the two years that he's been Pope," she said.

Ms Arroyo said she was invited by the Assumption Alumni Association to lead the delegation that attended the canonization of Marie Eugenie, founder of the Religious of the Assumption.

"Then I was invited by the Pope to see him and then the president of Portugal is incoming president of the European Union, so it was really a confluence of events which gave me this opportunity," she said.

She also said: "I thanked the Blessed Virgin for the miraculous healing of my husband because I prayed to her during that time," she said.

Filipino bishops' reaction

Reacting to the President's promise to the Pope to improve democracy and human rights, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, who also is vice president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said: "We hope something concrete will come out of it because the country is being watched by the international community and human rights groups especially on the extrajudicial killings."

Not in command of AFP

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, an outspoken critic of the Arroyo administration, said he believed that the President's promise was "not tenable."

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz said he believed Ms Arroyo's promise was "not tenable."

"As Commander in Chief, she already lost her command. Meaning, the AFP and other entities are acting on their own with or without her say," Cruz added.

With reports from Jerome Aning and Maila Ager, Inquirer.net

Pichay bows out; vows to bounce ...

From page A1

lieves the experience has enriched him.

And it might also have prepared him for a shot at a higher office, Pichay said yesterday, citing the case of the late President Richard Nixon, who lost in his bid for governor of California but bounced back to win the US presidency.

"This is not the last you will hear from me," the Surigao del Sur congressman vowed in a phone interview.

Why magnify the obvious?

"I believe I have done well for a political neophyte in the national scene," he said, finally conceding defeat after two of his Team Unity (TU) colleagues—Michael Defensor and Ralph Recto—had thrown in the towel.

"This is not the end for me, I still have 2010 to look forward to."

A Commission on Elections tally showed that there were not enough uncounted votes left to help Pichay, currently in 16th place in the race for 12 Senate seats.

Unlike Defensor and Recto, Pichay said he found no need to announce his surrender with fanfare.

"Why do you have to magnify the obvious?" he asked.

Enriching experience

Pichay declared at the start of the 90-day campaign period that he intended to win and his single-minded pursuit of a Senate seat was evident in his political ads on prime time television and radio and in his well-run and well-funded sorties.

"The experience was very enriching. For a new face in national politics to garner 10 million votes, I consider that a success. I beat big names along the way," said Pichay.

He was disappointed he lost but he claimed he never "entertained any thought that I would be a sure winner."

Odds against him

Pichay knew that the odds were stacked up against him when he decided to run—he had only a 45-percent awareness rating and a 5.7-percent approval rating. The conventional wisdom was only those with a minimum 75-percent awareness rating and a double-digit approval rating had a chance.

"I thought it was a big challenge to beat the odds and I came very close," said Pichay.

He was also disappointed that the TU did not win at least six seats in the Senate as projected in the group's worst-case scenario, but he refused to make any excuses.

No regrets

Pichay said he did not regret spending so much for a losing battle but he clarified that he was not the election's biggest spender. "My campaign ads were magnified only because I focused on television and radio. But I estimate that my costs only ran up to P80 million and only P30 million of that came out of my pocket," he said.

Pichay plans to go back to his private business—his family owns dzME radio and the Remate tabloid—and make them grow over the next three years.

"I have three options in 2010—I can stay with my private life or regain my old seat in Congress or take another shot at a higher post.

"I believe I have made a good political investment. Even great political leaders suffer setbacks before they become a success, like Abraham Lincoln and Richard Nixon."

15 Liberals back Garcia bid ...

From page A1

had already talked to Garcia about its possible support.

Zamora joining fray

With 123 votes needed to clinch the speakership, Tañada said the LP would campaign among House members from both the administration and its colleagues in the opposition to vote for the 82-year-old, three-term Cebu governor.

"This is their chance to reform the institution. We had been under Speaker De Venecia before. Did anything good happen?" Tañada said.

De Venecia has been Speaker since 2001. Having also held the post from 1992 to 1998, he is seeking a record fifth term.

Two other administration lawmakers—Mary Ann Susano of Quezon City and Edelmiro Amante of Agusan del Norte—have also thrown their hats into the derby.

The opposition says it is grooming San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora as its contender for the post.

JDV has numbers?

Garcia is a member of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), one of the top two parties in the House majority coalition.

Ms Arroyo has publicly stayed away from the fray, but a top Malacañang official claimed recently that the President's heart was for De Venecia.

Yesterday, the De Venecia camp claimed the Speaker's bid was backed by at least 165 lawmakers.

"It will still be quite a while before the opening of Congress (in July) ... It's hard to say that (De Venecia) already has secured the majority," Tañada said.

He said: "We're looking after the interest of the LP. We believe that the LP will have a greater involvement in the next Congress with Garcia than with the Speaker. We're thinking about the LP in the next Congress and its future."

Administration ploy

Members of the opposition in the House have raised fears that Garcia's bid might be a ploy by the Arroyo administration to control the House minority and prevent a third impeachment against Ms Arroyo from getting filed.

Garcia was the incumbent Cebu governor during the 2004 elections and was widely credited for delivering the million votes from his province that helped Ms Arroyo in her electoral fight with late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

By tradition, the loser in the speakership fight gets to be minority floor leader.

"Based on my conversation with Pablo Garcia, he wasn't forced by anyone to run. It's his sincere intention to reform the House and regain its credibility as an institution that made him do it," Tañada said, referring to speculation that Garcia's speakership bid was intended to ensure that the next minority leader would be an administration darling.

JDV in for 'surprises'

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte dismissed De Venecia's boast that he had the numbers, saying: "We will give him surprises every week."

"We're getting increasing adherents every day," Villafuerte said. "Tactically, it's good to keep De Venecia guessing."

Villafuerte was confident that in the end, "all anti-De Venecia elements will join us."

Brushing aside the claims of Garcia's backers, De Venecia's camp issued a statement quoting Parañaque Rep. Eduardo Zialcita, one of its senior leaders, as saying: "The race for speakership may be over."

The statement said 20 lawmakers from the breakaway Atienza group in the LP had signed a manifesto supporting De Venecia.

The statement quoted Deputy Speaker Eric Singson as saying: "In all aspects of counting, I am convinced that Speaker De Venecia will definitely win."

Last night, De Venecia and Kampi chair Ronaldo Puno were to host a dinner for neophyte congressmen in the 14th Congress. Villafuerte said the dinner would naturally be an occasion to court support for De Venecia's speakership bid.

No quorum

Garcia yesterday criticized De Venecia for the House's failure to reach a quorum on Monday. With only 106 lawmakers present, the session was adjourned at around 6:30 p.m.

"The failure of the House to achieve a quorum on the first day of the resumption of the regular session following the election is a sad reflection on its present leadership," Garcia said in a statement.

"There are still many legislative tasks that should be tackled before the new Congress starts its regular session. We have, unfortunately, a continuing crisis of leadership in the House that must be ended."

Opposition challenge

San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito announced in a press conference the opposition's intention to field Zamora in the fight for House speakership.

Ejercito said Zamora was a logical choice, being a senior member of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) and the Genuine Opposition (GO).

"We are hoping we can get the numbers since it is a numbers game but we promise that we will give a good fight," Ejercito said.

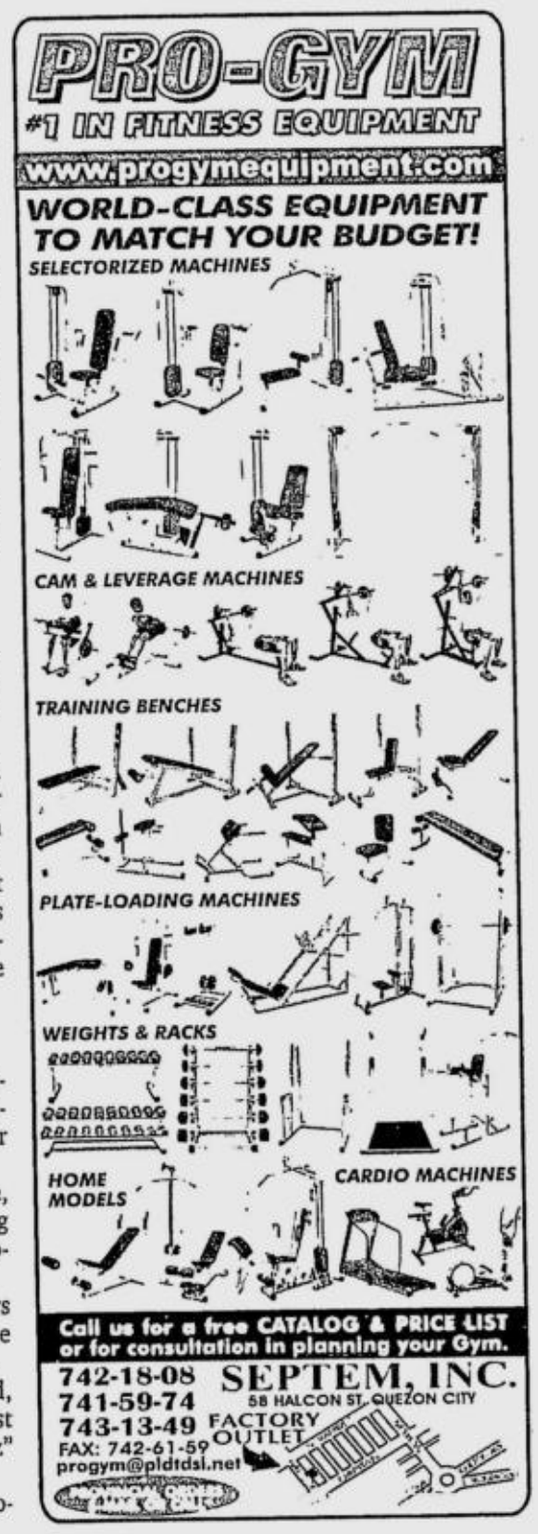
Should Zamora fail in his speakership bid, he stands to assume the minority leader post to be vacated by Senator-elect Francis "Chiz" Escudero.

Cagayan de Oro Rep.-elect Rufus Rodriguez would be his deputy.

Garcia gave assurances that, if he was to be elected Speaker, he would ensure that all issues to be tackled in the 14th Congress would be discussed thoroughly.

But Garcia said he did not foresee another impeachment case against Ms Arroyo since most of opposition leaders would not want a sitting President as an opponent in 2010.

With reports from Kristine L. Alave and Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas



SO NEAR, YET SO FAR

Padaca proclamation faces another roadblock

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS yesterday cleared a major roadblock to the formal proclamation of reelectionist Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca as Isabela governor but has yet to resolve one last petition by rival Benjamin Dy questioning election returns from three more towns.

PADACA RAFFY LERMA

In a four-page resolution, the Comelec's Second Division denied Dy's petition to stop the canvassing of allegedly irregular and defective election returns from five Isabela towns and to suspend the proclamation of winning candidates in the gubernatorial and vice gubernatorial races.

The questioned returns were from the municipalities of Tumauini, Sto. Tomas, Roxas, Delfin Albano and Cordon.

The election body directed the provincial board of canvassers (PBOC) to proceed with the tabulation of vote tallies "of all the municipalities of said province and to proclaim the candidates who garner the most number of votes."

The Second Division also rejected Dy's supplemental pleading, which consisted of additional pieces of evidence and arguments to support his main appeal.

"However, in special proceedings, as in a preproclamation case, supplemental pleadings are prohibited and not allowed. [It], albeit a more complete pleading, cannot serve to substitute for the main appeal and cannot correct any of the deficiencies present therein," said the resolution.

This could have cleared the way for the proclamation of Padaca, who was leading by 5,275 votes based on the PBOC tally, excluding those from Ilagan, Echague and Tumauini.

But an unresolved petition questioning election returns from Ilagan, Jones and Cabagan might prevent the proclamation.

Presiding Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr., who admitted he was not aware of the other petition, cited the urgency to resolve the case even if the PBOC—being independent from the National Board of Canvassers—has the discretion to proceed or not with the proclamation.

"The petition has to be resolved because it might be invoked by the losing candidate (in stopping the proclamation of the winning candidate)," said Tuason, who penned the resolution dated June 4.

Meanwhile, Padaca's lawyer, Leila de Lima was surprised to learn that the resolution involved other towns aside from Ilagan, Tumauini, Echague, where the tabulation of certificates of canvass was deferred due to Dy's petition.

Apparently, their camp was not notified that another petition was filed before the Comelec, De Lima said.

But she said that the Comelec resolution dismissing Dy's appeals spelled victory, although wanting, for Padaca.

Should the PBOC proceed with the canvassing of CoCs from Ilagan, Tumauini and Echague, Padaca would stretch her lead over Dy by more than 12,000 votes more, De Lima said.

The deferred CoCs consisted of 182 election returns, in which Padaca obtained 18,262 votes compared to Dy's 6,298, she said.

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Gov't rejects OIC request for return of MNLF camp

THE GOVERNMENT HAS REJECTED AN Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) request to hand back two captured training camps to Muslim rebels, an official said yesterday.

Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said the request was made by Egyptian diplomat Sayyed Kassen El-Masry during the 34th OIC foreign ministers' conference in Islamabad recently.

The camps, occupied by forces of Habier Malik, a commander of the Muslim Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) on Jolo island, were captured by military forces in April after Malik's forces shelled a Marine base, killing three people.

The fighting marred a truce in place between the government and the MNLF as part of a peace accord signed in 1996, ending a decades-old separatist campaign in return for limited Muslim self-rule.

Seguis told reporters that the Egyptian diplomat's suggestion was dismissed, adding that April's military operation did not breach the peace accord since only Malik and his supporters had taken up arms against the government.

"This is a law enforcement matter," Seguis said.

"Malik is a fugitive from justice. He attacked a military camp. Right now, the military is in the process of developing the (captured) camps," Seguis added.

The 57-nation OIC still recognizes the MNLF as the sole representative of the Philippines' Muslim minority. *AFP*

A plus METRO

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Text us your feedback: inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

BACK TO SCHOOL
(From left) A girl is in tears as she looks for her mother on her first day of school at the Batasan Elementary School in Quezon City. A group of students joins their teacher in acting out the words of a song while two others settle down for a nap during break time at Commonwealth Elementary School, also in Quezon City.
PHOTOS BY JOAN BONDOC

2 YEARS AFTER ROLDAN KIDNAP CASE

Pa recounts 5-year-old son's trauma

By Kristine L. Alave

WHEN HIS SON, THEN ONLY THREE YEARS OLD, was kidnapped in 2005 by a group allegedly headed by former actor and congressman Dennis Roldan, the abductors not only took away their joy, they also deprived the child of a chance at a normal life, the victim's father, Roger Yu, said.

Yu, who testified in court for the first time yesterday, said the incident has scarred his son to the point where he has become withdrawn and unfriendly.

In an interview after the trial, Yu said his son is now doing fine although he is still "withdrawn" and wary about meeting people and strangers. "He's the opposite of what he used to be," the father noted.

He expressed fear that his son, who is his and his wife's only child, would remain traumatized by the incident for years.

According to Yu, who described the boy as a happy child before the kidnapping, his son could no longer leave their house to play with other children like before. He also reacts negatively to villains he sees on television. "He hates bad people," Yu added.

The family has also avoided going to public places like malls and parks, activities his son used to enjoy.

Now, whenever his son moves around, he is accompanied by bodyguards, Yu said.

"He does not have a normal life like before. He used to play in parks and he would tell me about the people he met there. Now, that's not allowed. He doesn't trust people anymore," he added.

Yu declined to say if his son, now five years old, is enrolled in school for security reasons. Most of the time, the boy stays in their house in Pasig City where a tutor often visits him.

"I try to make it as normal as possible, but there are limitations," the father said.

Yu added that his son is still undergoing therapy to help him deal with the trauma caused by the incident. The boy is afraid of being alone and refuses to sleep by himself, he said.

"If he wakes up alone, he will start to cry," Yu said.

Until now, the boy has not forgotten how he was abducted and Yu was concerned that it would remain with him throughout his life.

"This morning, he didn't want me to go to court. But I had to explain to him that there is a hearing," he explained.

Yu said his boy has not questioned the presence of bodyguards or the fact that he could not play with other children anymore. "He understands that this is for his own security, so that the bad men could not get him," he said.

He added that the family's long term plan was to leave the country so that their son could have a normal life. But Yu said they would finish the trial before even thinking of migrating to a foreign country.

In the hearing yesterday, Yu narrated to the court the events surrounding his son's kidnapping.

Yu added that he immediately contacted Teresita Ang-See, president of an anti-crime group that helps Chinese-Filipino families deal with kidnappings, as she was the only person he and his wife Jenny could trust at that time.

"People around you are immediate suspects," he told the court. He added that he and his wife spent as much as half a million pesos during the ordeal as they had to check into hotels for two months out of fear for their safety.

The kidnappers then contacted them through his wife's cell phone, demanding P250 million in exchange for his son. Yu said they had difficulty raising the amount as they did not have that kind of money.

Yu testified before Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 159 Judge Rodolfo Bonifacio, after the previous judge, Agnes Carpio, inhibited herself from the case after the prosecution team protested her decision to grant bail to Roldan, but not to his co-accused.

Roldan, Mitchell Gumabao in real life and a former Quezon City representative, was present during the hearing. His co-accused, Romeo Orcajada, Noel and Rowena San Andres, Adrian Domingo, and Octavio Garces, were also there.

Yu said he hopes that the new judge would be impartial. "I'm glad that the hearing has resumed. But I'm also sad that I have to recall the unfortunate incidents. I hope that the judge would be fair and justice would be served accordingly," he added.

P100,000 reward for capture of armed robbers

By Julie M. Aurelio

PARAÑAQUE CITY MAYOR FLORENCIO Bernabe Jr. has offered P100,000 for the capture of members of an armed group who tried to rob the armored van of the Banco de Oro branch at SM Sucat mall Monday afternoon.

Two of the bank's security guards were killed in the incident while four other guards and a 12-year-old boy were wounded.

"The mayor is especially interested in going after Bobby Baliber, a Parañaque resident who has a standing arrest warrant against him," Supt. Ronald Estilles, the city chief of police, said.

Baliber, who lives on Kalamansi St., Purok 2 in Barangay BF, based on police records, is reportedly wanted for robbery and homicide.

In a phone interview yesterday, Estilles told the INQUIRER that they have confirmed the identity of three other suspects believed to be involved in the robbery attempt.

He identified them as Ray Gilbert Culanco, said to be the leader of the group; Genevieve Calunod and Raymond Martin.

The four are allegedly members of the Ampang Group, a notorious robbery and holdup gang based in Cavite.

Estilles said Culanco, Calunod and Martin were arrested in February 2005 for robbing a shop inside SM City Pampanga. Seized from them were several high-powered firearms, including M-16 rifles.

"We were able to identify them through the descriptions of witnesses, and with the help of footage from a close circuit TV in the mall," the police official added. But the three disappeared after posting bail.

Estilles said he has formed a 15-man task force to go after the suspects and other members of the Ampang Group. The team is headed by his deputy, Supt. Teofilo Andrada.

On Monday, at around 12:30 p.m., a group of 10 to 15 men fired upon several security guards of Banco de Oro who were guarding an armored van parked outside the mall.

The suspects, however, fled after other security guards fired back. Two guards — John Ray Awacay and Felizardo Castillo — were killed while four others were treated for gunshot wounds.

Twelve-year-old Viking Magnaye, who was passing by the area when a stray bullet hit him in the leg, was also hospitalized.

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It's back to old campuses for Manila students

By Allison W. Lopez

STUDENTS OF JOSE ABAD SANTOS High School and Rajah Soliman High School in Binondo, Manila, will hold classes on their old campuses, at least, for now.

Pedro Arao, administrative officer of the Division of City Schools in Manila, said Mayor-elect Alfredo Lim has given the go-signal for students of the two schools to remain in their old buildings on La Chambre Street.

"Mayor Lim ordered them to stay. He even offered to help transfer the chairs and other equipment back to the old site," he said.

Classes in the two schools were suspended yesterday, the first day of school for public elementary and high school students, after there was confusion among students who either went to the old site or to the new campus.

About 80 percent of the two schools' facilities and equipment have already been moved to the new campus on Numancia and Urbiztondo Streets, also in Binondo, to pave the way for the construction of a condominium at the old site.

Arao, however, said the situation has yet to be resolved as Lim was set to discuss the issue with Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

The majority of the schools' teachers, students and their parents have opposed the transfer, saying they would have to spend more money on transport fare. The site of the new school campus is about a kilometer away from the old one.

Last year, Lim and Sen. Jamby Madrigal filed a petition asking a Manila court to stop the city government's plan to convert the schools' old site into a housing and commercial area.

Their petition, however, was denied by the court although Lim and Madrigal filed a motion for reconsideration.

Asked why the issue was not resolved before classes opened the other day, Arao said the transfer was sidetracked by the May 14 elections.

He pointed out, however, that the new and more spacious campus would better accommodate the two schools' around 8,000 students.

HIS AND HE(I)RS
No hair-splitting issues at this beauty salon along Kamias, Quezon City.
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Muslim group bucks demolition move

By Julie M. Aurelio

MUSLIM LEADERS LIVING IN THE reclamation area on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, yesterday vowed to oppose a reported plan of a government agency to demolish homes and a mosque on the site.

"These people will die for this mosque. They will stay here and demand their rights," spokesperson Firdausi Abbas said in a press conference.

Residents, who have formed a group called the Samahan ng Magkakaisang Muslim sa Roxas Boulevard (Association of United Muslims in Roxas Boulevard), hit the plan of the Philippine Reclamation Authority to tear down their houses and the Grand Mosque in the reclamation area near the border of Pasay and Parañaque cities.

The group claimed that in 1999, then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo promised to give them the the stretch of land where they could build their homes. Abbas said that at that time, the Philippine Estates Authority agreed not to touch the reclamation area where the Muslims were residing.

"Now, the PRA wants to demolish their homes. Reclamation means to 'reclaim' an area by putting land over the sea. There is nothing to be reclaimed here, this is already land," Abbas, who also serves as the group's legal counsel, pointed out.

Open to transfer

He added, however, that they were open to moving out of the reclamation area if the government provides a suitable relocation site for the more than 300 families in the area.

"They are willing to be transferred, but the PRA must not touch the mosque," Abbas stressed.

He added that the PRA, with the assistance of the Pasay City police and Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino of the Armed Forces' National Capital Region Command, attempted to clear the area and tear down the mosque last week.

"They don't have a court order authorizing the demolition of the mosque. The PRA does not have the authority to do so," Abbas claimed.

He warned that if pushed to the limit, residents would die fighting anyone who attempted to desecrate their place of worship.

He also criticized Dolorfino's presence in the area, claiming that the pending demolition is a police matter and not the concern of the military.

"I hope they don't come up with allegations or reports that Abu Sayyaf members are hiding in our community," he said.

Amoraan Andaga, director of the Office of the President for External Affairs, said the families would be offered P30,000 in exchange for their relocation.

"We are still studying the possibility that the mosque can be left alone," he told the INQUIRER, adding that the PRA plans to construct a commercial center in the reclamation area after it is cleared.

Makati court junks Northrail motion; dispute far from over

By DJ Yap

THE LEGAL DISPUTE OVER THE controversial North Luzon Railways Corp. contract is far from over.

A Makati City court has junked the motion to dismiss filed by the defendants, including the Philippine government, in the civil case involving the contested Northrail contract.

Judge Cesar Santamaria of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 145 dismissed the motion filed by Northrail seeking to dismiss the complaint filed by a number of affected Bulacan settlers, and a group of lawyers led by Harry Roque.

The center of the dispute is a contract between the government-owned Northrail and the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. for the construction of railways from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan.

"The ruling shows that the only working institution in this country is the courts. It's a very good decision," Roque told the INQUIRER by phone.

The civil case arose from the alleged legal and constitutional defects in the contract, which the lawyers said were enough to invalidate the contract.

Such defects include the complainants' allegation that the contract did not comply with Philippine laws requiring public bidding for all procurements.

On March 17, 2006, Santamaria's court granted the complainants' prayer to hold preliminary summary hearings in the case but the defendants, including the Philippine government, moved to dismiss the case.

The defendants had argued that the complainants had no legal capacity to sue, that the court had no jurisdiction to hear the case, that the complaint stated no cause of action, and that the court had no jurisdiction over CNMEC, an agent of China.

CNMEC also filed a separate motion for reconsideration seeking the reversal of Santamaria's decision to hold summary hearings.

But in its omnibus motion dated May 15, the court denied both motions.

It said the plaintiffs could sue because they are taxpayers who may question any government action involving the expenditure of public funds.

The court said the case involved matters of "extreme urgency" since it involved public spending and the demolition of the settlers' homes.

BEST WISHES
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN
Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay congratulates 44 couples who tied the knot in a mass wedding ceremony held in front of City Hall on Monday.

Call center employee nabbed for faking three car theft incidents in Quezon City

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A CALL CENTER EMPLOYEE was arrested by Quezon City policemen after he allegedly used different names to report three car theft cases.

City police chief, Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, said Andre de Vera, 27, a resident of Filinvest Subdivision in the city, now faces perjury charges for fabricating car theft incidents "that have tainted the image of the city and the police."

Gatdula said De Vera, who introduced himself as Mark Anthony Leviste, was arrested last May 26 after he reported that his black Toyota Fortuner had been stolen at a parking lot on Commonwealth Avenue. In December 2006, De Vera, using the name Andre Delgado, reported to the police Anti-Carnapping Unit that his mocha brown Toyota Fortuner was forcibly taken from him by armed men at the corner of Tomas Morato Avenue and Scout Fuentebella Street.

A month later, the suspect, using his real name, told police that his mocha brown Toyota car was taken from him in the same area. On both occasions, De Vera claimed the vehicles had no plate numbers and only bore conduction stickers.

At the Land Transportation Office, the police discovered that both conduction stickers were issued to two Isuzu Hi-Lander vans.

Previous investigations showed that some owners in the rent-a-car business had faked car theft incidents for insurance purposes after clients failed to return rented vehicles.

CA reverses decision in drug case

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS reversed another conviction in a drug case for what it said was the police's failure to follow proper procedure.

The decision was handed down less than a month after the court's 10th Division acquitted seven Chinese nationals who were arrested for allegedly running a shabu laboratory in San Juan.

Saying one's conscience would not allow the imposition of grave penalties if the guilt of the suspect was not definitively proven, the court on May 30 reversed the Mandaluyong City Regional Trial Court's decision which found Victor Cristobal guilty for possession and sale of marijuana, and sentenced him to reclusion perpetua.

The appellate court also ordered the Bureau of Corrections to release Cristobal from detention.

Cristobal was arrested in February 2000 in Mandaluyong City during an operation conducted by the Metro Manila Narcotics Office.

In its decision, the Court of Appeals' 15th division said Cristobal's guilt was not proven beyond reasonable doubt based on the evidence.

"In this case, it is difficult to affirm the trial court's judgment of conviction which, to our mind, is based on a bare declaration that the guilt of the appellant has been proved. One's conscience rebels against doubtful imposition of death and other grave penalties without moral certainty as to the guilt of the accused," it said.

The court pointed out that Cristobal's house was illegally searched, hence, the marijuana found there could not be used against him.

"Evidence obtained during an illegal search is absolutely considered inadmissible for any purpose in any proceeding, the same being the fruit of a poisonous tree. Thus, the dried marijuana leaves cannot be admitted as evidence against the appellant," it said.

The appellate court added that the police failed to put the required markings on the marijuana brick allegedly seized from Cristobal. The markings were placed only after the items were submitted to the crime laboratory, it added.

DID YOU KNOW

THE BATTLE of Bangkusay Channel on June 3, 1571 was brought about by a local leader's disapproval of the arrival of Spanish forces in Manila. Sulayman, who controlled trade along the Pasig River, was unhappy about the arrival of the foreigners that he torched everything in sight before fleeing to Tondo to put up a fighting force. The lopsided battle was easily won by Spanish muskets and cannons. Sulayman was killed, and his death marked the beginning of Spain's three-century rule of the islands.

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

HITCHHIKER
A child hitches a ride on the back of a pedicab with the driver unaware that he has a passenger.
REM ZAMORA

METROBRIEFS

Day robbery

THREE armed robbers barged into a house in Manila and carted away some P200,000 worth of cash and valuables at 11:15 a.m. yesterday. Armed with two handguns, the suspects broke into Imee Cocjin's two-story house on Espiritu Street, Singalong, and locked her, her daughters and housemaids in the bathroom. They then ransacked the house and made off with the victims' money, a laptop computer, cell phones and jewelry, P01 Alrey Bundallan of the Manila Police District Malate station said. The victims, however, managed to call a relative who, in turn, asked help from the police. By the time the police arrived, the robbers had already left.

Tina G. Santos

Grisly discoveries

BODY parts that had been chopped off were found in plastic bags in different areas in Valenzuela City yesterday, the police said. City police chief, Supt. Billy Beltran, said the grisly discoveries were made between 5:50 a.m. and 9 a.m. by different persons. First to be found was a bag containing a pair of legs believed to be belong to a man. The legs were found on Parada Road and bore tattoos which said, "Bong Naquita" and "Marinduque Mataac." Next, a bag containing a severed hand was found inside the Karuhatan Public Cemetery with the words, "Bing Delpan" and "Danao Donato" tattooed on it. Police said the garbage bag also yielded a pair of underwear, rubber slippers, and a pair of denim short pants.

Nancy Carvajal

Fire hits 3 houses

A FIRE struck three houses in Barangay Tabacalera, Pateros yesterday afternoon, destroying at least P700,000 worth of property. Arson investigators said they have yet to pinpoint the cause of the fire which began at around 2:30 p.m. at the house of Pilar Gabriel on Tiamsic St. SFO2 Danny Laron said the fire apparently started in the room of Gabriel's son, Ferdinand. The blaze reached the fourth alarm and partially damaged two adjacent houses. The fire raged for 35 minutes before it was put out.

Julie M. Aurelio

Organic food bazaar

STARTING this week, there will be an organic food bazaar at the Metrowalk parking lot on Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, every Friday to Sunday, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. "Palengkehan sa MetroWalk" will feature different exhibitors offering a variety of products like organic vegetables and fruits, herbal products, plants, ornamentals and cut flowers, native chicken and eggs, fresh meat, live seafood and homemade products. For more information, please call 0917-5291426, 0917-5219791 and 0918-2950246.

Thousands mark anniversary of 1989 Tiananmen massacre in HK

HONG KONG—TENS OF THOUSANDS gathered on Monday for Hong Kong's annual candlelight vigil to mark the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, the only such commemoration on Chinese soil.

"We will seek justice for you. A democratic China must come true," Szeto Wah, one of the organizers, said in a speech to the crowd who raised their candles in a dark and packed Victoria Park to remember those who died.

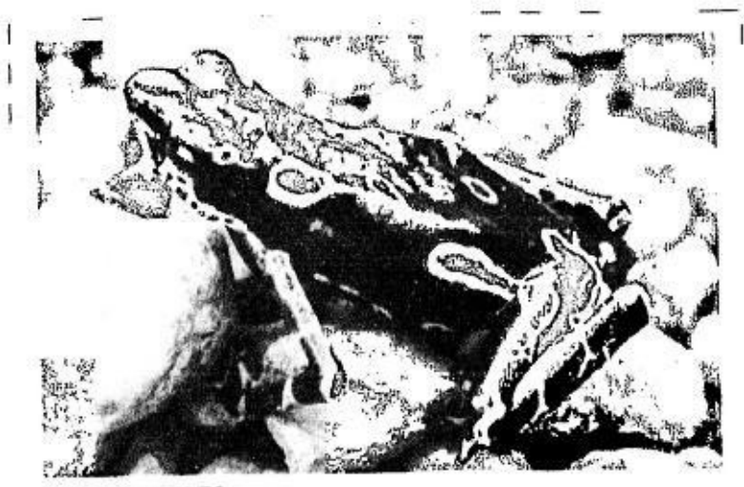
The Chinese government sent troops into Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 to quell six weeks of peaceful democracy protests, leading to the deaths of many students and civilians.

The annual vigil in Hong Kong has taken on special resonance this year after a local pro-Beijing politician took exception to calling the Tiananmen crackdown, which saw hundreds if not thousands killed, a massacre.

The remarks by Ma Lik, chair of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), immediately drew fire from the families of victims, as well as activists and politicians here.

Chants of "Down with Ma Lik" were heard occasionally among the crowd, which organizers estimated at 55,000, more than last year's 44,000. Police later said they estimated the crowd at 27,000.

Dozens of flowers and wreaths were laid, and songs were sung to commemorate those who died. *AFP*



NEW SPECIES
A purple fluorescent frog, of the genus Atelopus, is one of 24 new species found in the South American highlands of Suriname on June 4. Four other new frog species, six species of fish, 12 dung bettles and a new ant species were also discovered. REUTERS

WORLDBRIEFS

Nigeria sues Pfizer over 'killer drugs'

ABUJA—Nigeria filed a lawsuit on Monday for $7 billion damages from Pfizer over a drug test in which about 200 children were either killed or deformed, court officials said. The federal government suit says the children suffered various degrees of adverse effects ranging from deafness to muteness, paralysis, brain damage, loss of sight, slurred speech, while 11 died. A similar suit was filed last month by Kano, Nigeria's largest state, which is seeking $2.75 billion from the pharmaceutical giant. The Kano state suit alleges that Pfizer administered in 1996 an untested drug called Trovan Floxacin without authorization on almost 200 children infected with meningitis in the state. The federal lawsuit echoes those charges. *AFP*

US Democratic solon charged with bribery

WASHINGTON—US Democratic Rep. William Jefferson, accused of hiding $90,000 of intended bribes in his freezer, was charged on Monday with soliciting bribes and paying off a Nigerian official. The 16-count indictment charges the Louisiana lawmaker with racketeering, soliciting bribes for himself and his family, fraud, money laundering, obstruction of justice, conspiracy and violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Jefferson, 63, faces a maximum of 235 years in prison if convicted. His lawyer said Jefferson was innocent and would fight the charges. *Reuters*

US charges 10 in Laos armed coup plot

SAN FRANCISCO—US prosecutors charged 10 people on Monday with seeking to topple the Lao government in what they described as a dramatic cloak-and-dagger plot thwarted by an undercover agent posing as an arms dealer. Most prominent among those charged is Vang Pao, 77, a resident of southern California and ethnic Hmong. A general in the Royal Lao Army before the Communists came to power in 1975, he led a US Central Intelligence Agency-trained mercenary army during the war in Indochina. *Reuters*

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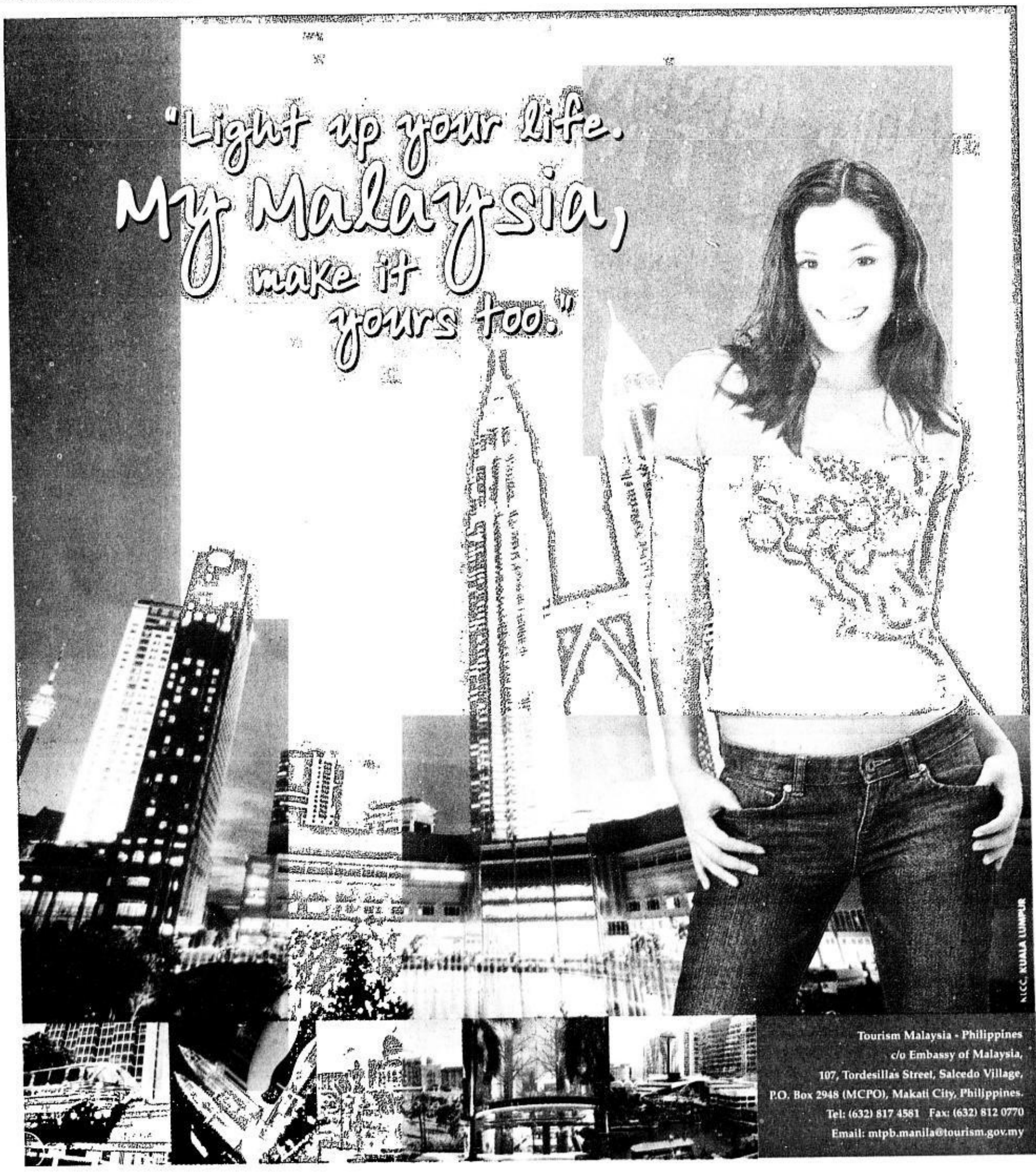

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Czechs nix US missile system plan

PRAGUE—RUSSIA IS NOT ALONE IN DISLIKING the idea of basing a US missile defense system in the Czech Republic and other countries on its doorstep.

Most Czechs aren't happy about the proposal, either. Recent polls in this former Soviet satellite, now a democratic Nato ally, show more than 60 percent of the public in opposition.

US President George W. Bush arrived on Monday evening in Prague for a day of meetings with Czech leaders.

The White House has billed a speech Bush will deliver on Tuesday from the local headquarters of Radio Free Europe on democracy as the highlight of his visit here. His Czech counterparts have complaints with Washington to discuss, such as a two-tiered visa system for European nations that requires Czech citizens to obtain visas to travel to the US.

However, the international debate over the missile defense system likely will drown out everything else during Bush's stay in Prague. The US plan calls for an anti-missile radar base to be built at the Brdy military zone southwest of the capital.

For their part, Czech leaders have brushed off Russia's objections, remaining receptive to the project. Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek called it "a necessary step which will significantly increase our security and also the security of our European allies and neighbors."

Most Czech citizens, though, worry about Russian threats to take military steps in response, and they fear that the installation could make the tiny country a terrorist target.

In Prague last weekend, more than 1,000 people protested the plan. Demonstrators planned to show their displeasure again on Tuesday outside medieval Prague Castle, where Bush was to meet with Topolanek and President Vaclav Klaus.

Over the weekend, Russian President Vladimir Putin stepped up already incendiary remarks about the US and its intentions with the shield, warning that Moscow could take "retaliatory steps" including aiming nuclear weapons at US military bases in Europe. *AP*

Hundreds of millions to suffer from melting of Earth's ice, UN warns

TROMSOE, NORWAY—THE melting of the Earth's ice has accelerated in recent decades, an alarming phenomenon that could affect hundreds of millions of people across the world, the United Nations warned in a report on Monday.

"The futures of hundreds of millions of people across the world will be affected by declines in snow cover, sea ice, glaciers, permafrost and lake ice," the Global Outlook for Ice and Snow report, published on the eve of World Environment Day, said.

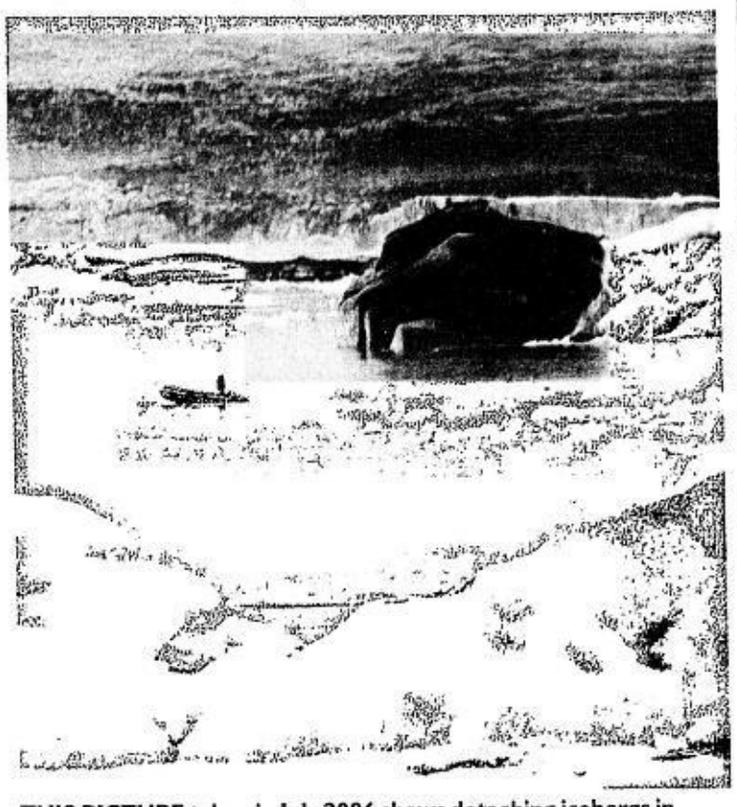
"Impacts are likely to include significant changes in the availability of water supplies for drinking and agriculture, rising sea levels affecting low lying coasts and islands and an increase in hazards such as subsidence of currently frozen land," it said.

The Arctic ice sheet has shrunk by six to seven percent in winter and by 10 to 12 percent in summer over the past 30 years, the report said.

The snow-covered regions of the northern hemisphere have reduced by between 7 and 10 percent during March and April during the same period, according to the report presented by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The melting of the ice and snow is not only a consequence of global warming, it is also an accelerating factor, researchers presenting the report in the Norwegian Arctic town of Tromsoe said.

"Snow and ice reflect 70 to 80 percent of the sun's energy, whereas water absorbs it. If snow and ice continue to melt, this will amplify global warming," report author Paal Prestrud told journalists. *AFP*



THIS PICTURE taken in July 2006 shows detaching icebergs in Iceland's Vatnajokull glacier as they move towards the sea. The Global Outlook for Ice and Snow report was launched yesterday by the United Nations Environment Programme to mark World Environment Day. AFP

HILTON AP

Paris Hilton begins three-week jail term a day early

LOS ANGELES—FROM THE camera flashes on the red carpet of a Hollywood awards show to the walls of a jail cell—what a difference a day makes when you're Paris Hilton.

The 26-year-old heiress, a symbol of privilege and American celebrity culture, was booked into a Los Angeles County jail early on Monday, a day ahead of her court-ordered deadline, to begin serving a three-week sentence for violating probation in an alcohol-related reckless driving case.

She surrendered to authorities in downtown Los Angeles hours after making a surprise appearance at the MTV Movie Awards *(See related story in Entertainment Section)*, and was transferred to the Century Regional Detention Facility in nearby Lynwood, the county sheriff's department said.

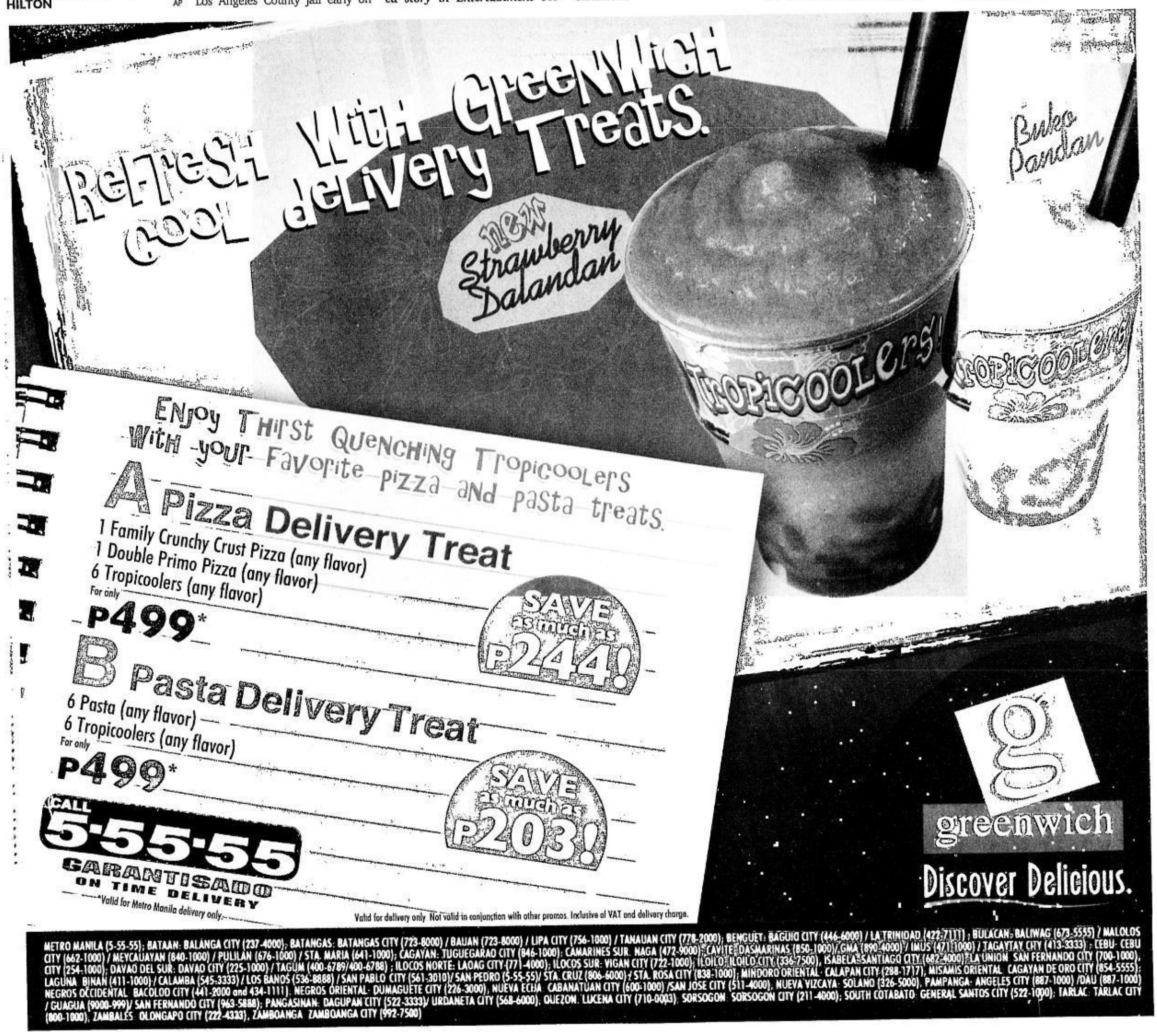
Once there, she was fingerprinted, photographed and issued an ID wristband, orange-colored jail clothing and toiletries, said sheriff's department Sgt. Diane Hecht in a statement.

Hecht said the booking for Hilton, whose great-grandfather Conrad Hilton started the global Hilton Hotel empire, was completed by about 1 a.m. on Monday.

Her booking photo showed her dressed in a white V-neck top, wearing eye makeup and lip gloss with a slight smile, her blond hair swept to one side over her right shoulder.

Sheriff's department spokesperson Steve Whitmore described her as "cooperative," "calm" and "focused" during booking.

"This is an important point in my life, and I need to take responsibility for my actions," Hilton said in a statement issued by her lawyer. "Although I am scared, I am ready to begin my jail sentence." *Reuters*



WHAT'S INSIDE

Lady Archers best Letran; Adamson up/A28

SPORTS

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Roaring Rafa on a roll/A29

RP volley team's top spiker shot dead by robbers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VIOLENCE HAS SNUFFED OUT THE LIFE of the national volleyball team's top spiker.

Six-foot-two Ronie Borlagdatan, reputedly the most prolific scorer in the national team, was among three men shot and killed by five suspected robbers in Dasmariñas, Cavite, early Monday morning.

The victims were reportedly celebrating their championship in a volleyball tournament in the home of one of them when the suspects swooped in and shot them.

Borlagdatan sustained a gun shot wound in the head and died, while being treated, along with four of his friends, at the University Medical Center in Dasmariñas.

Two more of Borlagdatan's friends—Christopher Quine, 22, and Leo Balesa, 32—also died from gunshot wounds, said Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas, Cavite police director.

"He is a big loss to the national team," said Gus Sta. Maria, director of national coaches of the Philippine Volleyball Federation. "He's tall and talented, the best player we had in the team."

PVF secretary general Otie Camangian said they would seek the help of the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee in extending assistance to Borlagdatan's family.

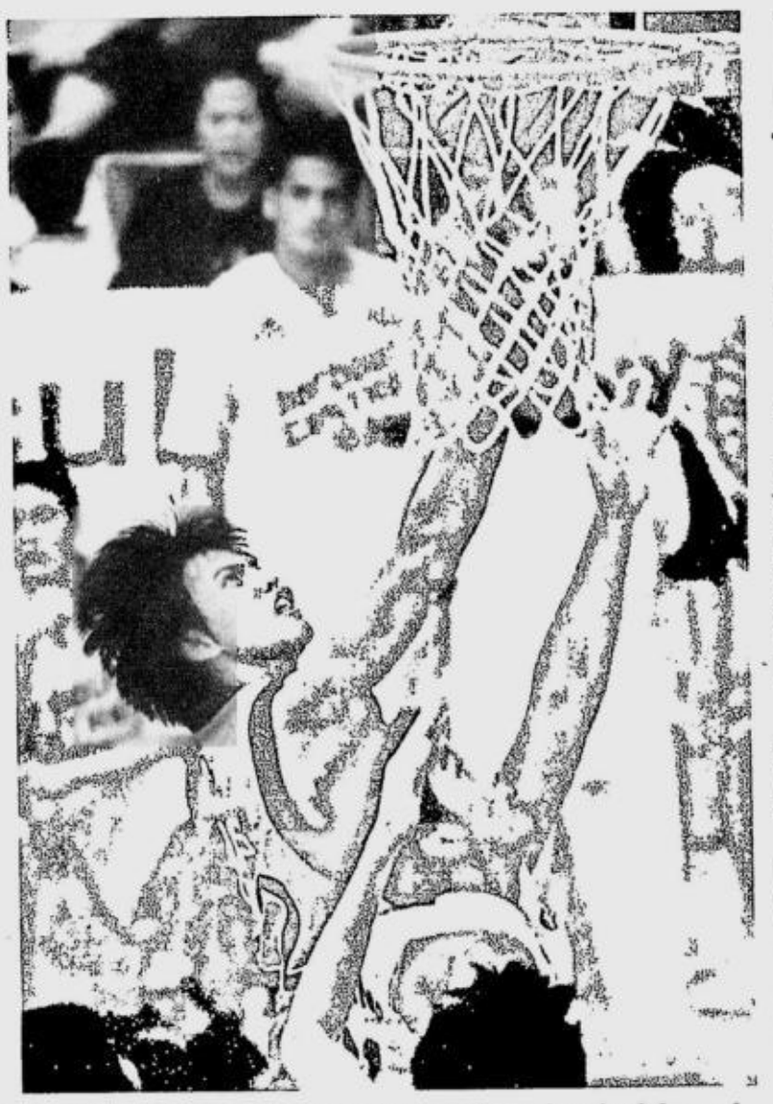
PVF head Pete Mendonza denounced the killings and urged the authorities to put the suspects immediately behind bars.

Borlagdatan, 22, was a graduating Criminology student at the De La Salle University-Dasmariñas.

Before Borlagdatan died, he was part of the newly formed national team made up of young and tall players that is set to see action in tournaments in South Korea in July and in Indonesia in September. The team will play in the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand in December.

Borlagdatan was the biggest star of the La Salle Dasmariñas squad which he steered to four straight championships in the Prisaa Southern Luzon games.

RP/ A28



HENKEL SISTA'S Ronnie Matias tips in a miss against the defense of two Harbour Centre defenders yesterday. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Moneymen, Super Sealers stay in hunt

By Jasmine W. Payo

MUCH FOCUS HAD BEEN GIVEN on the return of injured Fil-Am Ryan Reyes. After playing a key role in a 1-2 punch, Gilbert Malabanan showed he deserves a second look.

The duo drilled in the crucial baskets as Henkel Sista averted a Harbour Centre sweep with an 81-78 victory that forged a do-or-die match for the Finals berth in the PBL Unity Cup.

Injured and all, Reyes double-pumped his way to a basket with 23.4 seconds remaining to lift the Super Sealers past the defending champions in Game 2 of their best-of-three semifinal series yesterday at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

"He didn't want to lose, he wanted a chance to play in the semis," said Sista coach Caloy Garcia of the 6-foot-1 rookie point guard. "Even with his injury, he wanted to help the team in any way. He deserved that last shot."

Reyes, who saw action despite a pulled groin muscle, provided the highlight of the game that Malabanan commanded for three quarters.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Olivarez College Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Toyota Balintawak vs Cebuana Lhuillier
4 p.m.—Henkel Sista vs Harbour Centre

"Credit goes to Malabanan," said Garcia. "He played well as a leader. He stepped up more than anyone else."

Malabanan, a seasoned 6-foot-4 forward, drilled in nine of Sista's 13 points in a three-minute stretch that pushed it ahead, 58-49, late in the third period.

Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala also turned to a veteran as the top seed forged a knockout battle with a 71-62 victory against Toyota Balintawak in the other Final Four duel.

Ariel Capus fired back-to-back three-pointers in a run that featured a rain of triples for a 63-53 Moneymen lead in the final three minutes.

"He was clutch," said coach Luigi Trillo of Capus, who shot eight of his 15 markers in the final period. "He took it upon himself, stood out big and took the big shots."

Malabanan topscored with 23 points and grabbed nine rebounds for the Super Sealers.

Although the game-winning shot was only Reyes' sixth point of the game, the Fil-Am standout registered a game-high eight assists and three steals in 17 minutes of action.

Ryan Araña, who paced Batang Pier with 18 markers, buried a triple that cut the margin to 79-78, before fouling Fritz Bauzon in the next play.

Bauzon hit his charities to increase Sista's lead to three, 81-78, with 12.1 seconds left.

Chico Lanete missed a potential game-tying triple at the buzzer.

The scores:

First Game

HENKEL SISTA 81—Malabanan 23, Bonus 12, Matias 10, Bauzon 8, Eman 7, Reyes 6, Misa 5, Javier 4, Yambao 3, Villamin 2, Alfad 1, Saldua 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 78—Araña 18, Lanete 11, Castro 9, Belga 8, Intal 8, Vergara 8, Gamboa 7, Asoro 5, Alonzo 2, Gaco 2, Stephens 0, Fernandez 0.

Quarters: 21-17, 39-41, 60-59, 81-78

Second Game

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 71—Bono 17, Capus 15, Kramer 10, Dulay 6, Sta. Maria 5, Dela Cuesta 5, Escalona 3, Dela Peña 3, Oreta 2, Burtscher 2, Viardo 2, Yee 1, Grijaldo 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 62—Daa 12, Cruz 11, Devance 10, Coronel 9, Fajardo 8, Rodriguez 6, Cabahug 5, Cagoco 2, Tan 0, Dedicatoria 0, Jaime 0, Guerrero 0.

Quarters: 14-18, 31-30, 48-47, 71-62

Kings clash with Aces for 2nd s'final berth

JONG UICHICO HAD SAID THAT BEING "IN the quarterfinals wouldn't be that bad."

But that doesn't mean that Barangay Ginebra is not prepared to give anyone hell to go past that.

The Gin Kings slug it out with the Alaska Aces at 7:20 tonight at the Araneta Coliseum, with the winner automatically advancing to the PBA Fiesta Cup's Final Four and earning, among other things, a three-week break at the very least.

San Miguel Beer and Air21, meanwhile, clash in a playoff of their own to stay out of the wildcard phase in the 4:35 p.m. contest.

Ginebra got a lift from a victory by sister team San Miguel Beer over Talk 'N Text on Sunday, as it ended up tied with Alaska for the second-best record after the long elimination round.

AIR21'S Wynne Arboleda (left) and Aris Dimaunahan (back) apply tough pressure on Ginebra import Rod Nealy in Sunday night's game. The Kings downed the Express, 121-116. INQUIRER PHOTO/AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Air21
7:20 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Alaska

Had the Beermen lost, the Kings would have been relegated to a quarterfinal stint, with the Aces and the Phone Pals battling for the second semifinal ticket.

"Being undermanned as we are, our mind-set was that we would be satisfied with whatever we get," Uichico said Sunday.

"Being in the quarterfinals wouldn't be that bad. But of course, if we can get to the semifinals outright, it would be better."

Red Bull, the defending champion here, topped the elimination round with a 13-5 slate for the first Final Four berth.

Ronald Tubid has been playing big of late and Rod Nealy is churning out consistent numbers. Both will be the main headaches for the Aces, who will also be very tough to crack with Rosell Ellis not showing signs at all of a hamstring pull.

The energetic Tubid matched his career-high with 30 points in a 121-116 victory over Air21. He also had 10 rebounds and Nealy 35 and 15 boards in a two-headed battering ram the Express could not stop all game.

Alaska coach Tim Cone, meanwhile, has made his team peak at the right time, with Mike Cortez slowly but surely returning to fearsome form and Willie Miller transforming into the team's primary offensive option.

Both teams match up pretty well, even though Alaska has won its two collisions with the Kings in this tournament.

Galen Young was the architect of the Beermen's 105-99 win over the Phone Pals as he scored 26 points, grabbed 15 rebounds and fell three assists short of a triple double.

The loser of the San Miguel-Air21 game will go to the wildcard as the No. 6 seed, forging a collision with No. 9 Sta. Lucia in a knockout match. The other pairing is between Coca-Cola and Purefoods.

Musong R. Castillo

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Puentevella: RP will lose SEAG overall title to Thailand

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINES' CHIEF OF MISSION to this year's 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand says there's every reason to believe that the hosts will seize the overall title from the Filipinos.

Monico Puentevella, also vice president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, expects the Filipinos to end up second this time.

"A decent second (overall behind Thailand)," said Puentevella.

The Bacolod congressman said that besides the trend that the host country has been winning the crown since 2001, the Thais have dominated the field whenever the biennial event steps onto their territory.

Puentevella, along with ranking POC and Philippine Sports Commission officials, arrived yesterday from a three-day summit sponsored by the SEAG Federation Council.

Not that sports officials are already conceding the crown to the Thais, but the odds are simply stacked on their favor following their successful staging of the SEAG in the past.

"Every time they (Thais) host the games, they always come out on top," said Puentevella.

Thailand hosted and won the inaugural of the regional meet in 1959 followed by overall victories in 1975 and 1985 held in Bangkok before lording it over again in 1995 Chiang Mai, the first time the games were held outside of the capital city.

A total of 485 gold medals from 43 sports are at stake in the 24th edition of the games to be held in three satellite venues in Thailand scheduled on Dec. 6-16.

The games, with Nakhon Rachasima province as hub, will officially open on Dec. 6 but football and shooting will kick off hostilities as early as Nov. 29.

During the SEAG Federation Council meeting, 46 more events were added, bringing the number of medals at stake to 485 from 441, which was approved during the council's initial meeting last year.

Out of the 46 events added, 15 are considered gold-medal potentials for Team Philippines with the additional events from dancesport, traditional boat race, diving and billiards boosting its stock on defending the overall crown it won two years ago.

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Lady Archers best Letran; SSC rips UST

By Romina S. Austria

LA SALLE TURNED TO ITS GUEST PLAYERS TO SURVIVE A GRITTY LETRAN, 25-22, 25-18, 23-25, 25-17, yesterday and snap a two-game losing skid in the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

In the first game, Adamson posted its second straight win after three losses, toppling Ateneo, 16-25, 20-25, 25-22, 25-20, 15-13.

Defending NCAA champion San Sebastian got the better of UAAP titleholder University of Santo Tomas, 26-24, 25-14, 18-25, 25-21, to clinch at least a tie for the four remaining semifinal seats with its fourth win in five starts.

UST fell to 2-3 with its second straight defeat.

With Thai Sanorseang Areerat and Amy Guanco at the firing end, the Lady Archers thwarted repeated comeback attempts by the Lady Knights with smashes and crosscourt hits that put Letran's defense in disarray.

Mainstays Jacqueline Alarca and Michelle Datuin joined the La Salle offensive in the second set when Letran closed in at 18-21, from a seemingly insurmountable 19-11 La Salle lead.

Alarca and Datuin, together with Areerat, scored on their respective attacks one after the other as the Lady Archers took a two sets-to-nil lead.

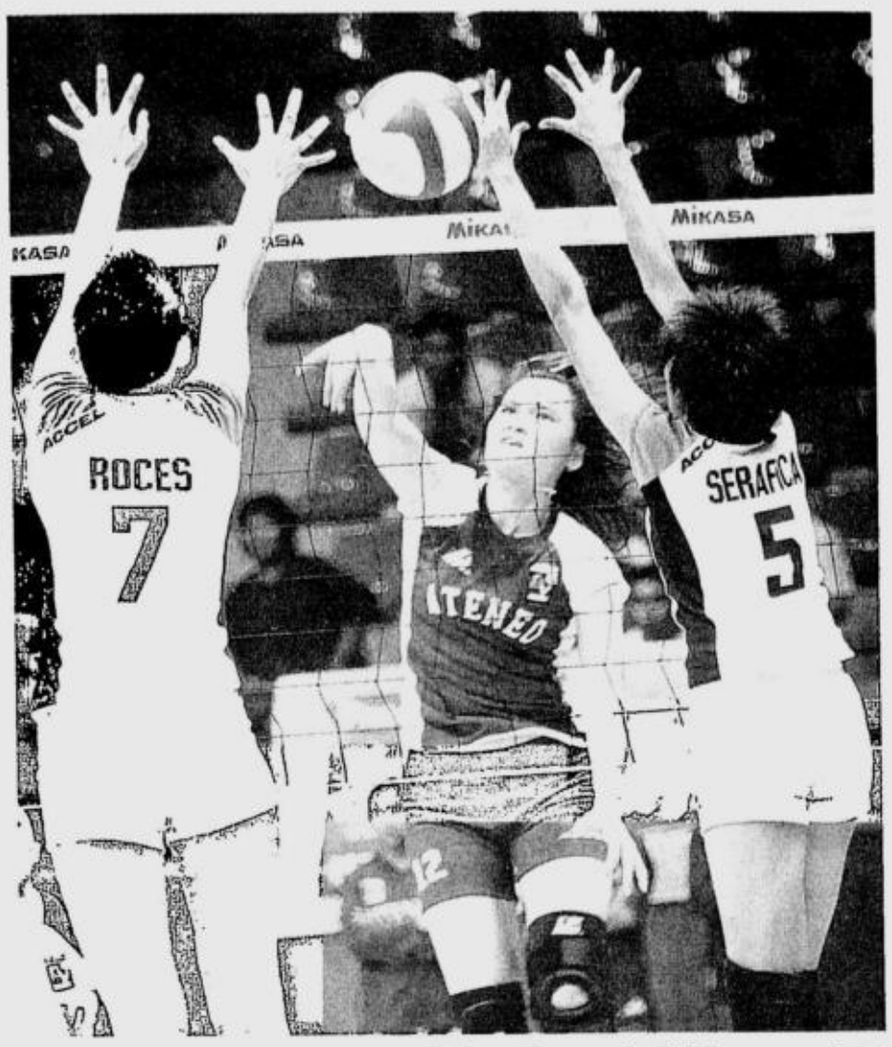
Although Letran capitalized on La Salle's end-game lapses to take the third, 25-23, the revitalized Lady Archers could not be denied in the deciding set, this time protecting another 19-11 lead.

The win raised the Lady Archers' record to 3-3 and kept them on target for a semifinal seat.

Letran's chances of entering the five-team semisfinal round dimmed further as it remained in the cellar at 1-5.

STANDINGS	W	L
Lyceum	5	0
SSC	4	1
Ateneo	3	2
UST	2	3
La Salle	3	3
Adamson	2	3
FEU	1	4
Letran	1	5

GAMES TOMORROW
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
1 p.m.—Lyceum vs UST
3 p.m.—San Sebastian vs Adamson
5 p.m.—Ateneo vs Far Eastern



ATENEO'S Thai guest player Kanchana Jindarat slams one in off Adamson standout Suzanne Roces and Janet Serafica moments before she experienced excruciating back pains. Jindarat was stretchered off the arena (below left). AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Like in their previous win over the favored University of Santo Tomas Tigresses—their first after three setbacks—the Lady Falcons banked on power-playing guest player Suzanne Roces, who sparkled anew with a game-high 31 points on top of 28 blocks.

Adamson dropped the first two sets but took the next two to move one win behind La Salle at 2-3.

Ateneo, which lost guest player and playing assistant coach Kanchana Jindarat to back spasms early in the fifth set, dropped to 3-2.

Gregorio attending cage draw

NEWLY INSTALLED SAMAHANG BASKETBOL ng Pilipinas executive director Patrick Gregorio left for Japan yesterday to attend the drawing of lots in the Fiba-Asia Men's championship slated in Tokushima next month.

There will be a total of 16 teams that will be divided into four groups in the tournament. Defending champion China leads all the entries that will be shooting for one available slot in the Beijing 2008 Olympics next year.

Asia's top four teams have been spread evenly in the four groups, with the Chinese in Group A, Lebanon in Group B, Qatar in Group C and Korea in Group D.

The draw would be very important, as only two teams from each group will advance to the quarterfinals.

And coach Chot Reyes said the draw will play a big role in the Philippines bid to tab an Olympic berth, but he is aware of the fact that the improvement of Asian teams doesn't make it as crucial a factor as before.

"We're praying for the best," Reyes said. "But realistically speaking, with the kind of teams playing, *wala ka na ring pipiliin*."

Musong R. Castillo

Filoil s'finals: Lions, Archers slight picks

POWERHOUSES LA SALLE AND SAN BEDA HAVE been tagged the slight favorites over their respective opponents in the semifinals of the Filoil Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup on June 11 at The Arena in San Juan.

The La Salle Green Archers battle the National University Bulldogs in the 1 p.m. opener while the San Beda Red Lions tackle the University of the East Red Warriors at 3 p.m.

Expected to lead the Green Archers run-and-gun attack are veteran guard Tyrone Tang, JV Casio, Cholo Villanueva, James Mangahas and Rico Maierhoffer.

The winners will clash for the title on June 13.

ALBEE Benitez talks about the 2007 Bingo Bonanza RP Open during yesterday's PSA Forum at Shakey's Orosa. With Benitez are (from left) retired Gen. Edgar Aglipay, former First Lady Amelita "Ming" Ramos, and IMG's James White.

Chen, Pi top attractions in RP Open badminton

WORLD-RATED CHEN HONG AND PI HONGyan banner the elite field when the 2007 Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open Badminton Championships is staged on July 18-22 at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

Chen, the world's No. 3 from China, will head the men's singles cast, with the sixth-ranked Pi, the naturalized Frenchwoman originally from China, will be the player to watch in ladies play.

This marks Bingo Bonanza's second straight sponsorship of the Philippine Open after its successful staging of the event last year where Malaysian Hafiz Hashim and Indian teener Sania Nehwal reigned in the singles event.

"It brings us pride and joy that the world's shuttlers will be back on Philippine soil, giving our countrymen the chance to watch them in person and at the same time give our local players an avenue to compete with the world's best," said Albee Benitez, president of Bingo Bonanza Corp., during the launch of the event in yesterday's PSA Forum at Shakey's on UN Ave.

Other guests were Philippine Badminton Association president Amelita "Ming" Ramos, PBA vice president retired Gen. Edgardo Aglipay and James White, VP of the organizing IMG.

"We'll try our best to win," said Ramos. "Unfortunately, some of the world's best players in badminton are in the region. It would still need some time and more financial help before we could really be at par with them. The Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open is a step for us to achieve that."

Aside from China, France and host Philippines, other teams playing in the $120,000 tournament are Britain, Wales, Japan, Slovenia, Russia, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland and Iran.

The event serves as an Olympic qualifying tournament and will give local players the chance to obtain world-ranking points.

Chen, back-to-back winner of the China and Denmark Opens last year, will be coming off a runner-up finish in the recent Asian Continental Championship and a semifinal stint in the Indonesian Super Series.

Others in the crack Chinese delegation: Lu Yi and Gong Weijie (men's singles), Wang Yihan and Zhu Jinging (women's singles), Guo Zhendong/Xie Zhongbo (men's doubles), Yang Wei/Zhao Tingting and Tian Qing/Pan Pan (ladies doubles) and Zhang Jun/Zhang Tingting (mixed doubles).

Other who have confirmed participation: Andrew Smith of England, Swiss bets Marc Schneidereit and Thomas Heiniger (men's singles) and Gita Djajawasito and Tenzin Pelling (women's singles), Heiniger/Schneidereit; Omar Cuntapay/Donovan Cuntapay (men's doubles), Djajawasito/Pelling (women's doubles); Pelling/Donovan and Djajawasito/Heinigier (mixed doubles); and Tri Kusharjanto/Minarti Timur (mixed doubles).

LeBron James, no Pinoy idea of superstar

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO ASK what's taking the NBA Finals too long to start.

There's this solid promise of a different excitement, brand new and big.

Fans could hardly wait to turn on the TV for more of LeBron James.

Well, the truth is that, before King James could take the Cleveland Cavaliers to the Promised Land, there was only poet Krip Yuson, here at home, to regret having very little of LeBron on NBA opening week.

Krip was in ass-kicking mood early last November after a skimpy serving of what he honestly felt would be the most delicious NBA fare this season.

* * *

Well, Krip could now afford to thump his chest and holler, "I told yah!"

However, instead of burp, the future National Artist just sits there in quiet admiration, happy in the thought he had foretold what a great read the Adventures of King James would be.

So, who else out there dared put his beer money on the Cavs, even after the defending champion Miami had disintegrated, soon to be followed to the exit by the hitherto marvelous Mavericks of Dallas?

* * *

It's like this. After the San Antonio Spurs moved into The Finals way ahead, there seemed no way to prevent another major confrontation with Detroit.

The Cavs were a long, long shot, a lost, hopeless pack after going down 0-2 in their Eastern Conference championship series with the Pistons.

Then LeBron James, on whose broad shoulders rested the Cavs' petty, dwindled hope, morphed from a kitten into a killer tiger overnight.

Here's how James, 22, ascertained himself of a niche in the Hall of Fame with an incandescent performance, as seen by Liz Robins of the New York Times:

"Single-handedly wresting that double-overtime win from Detroit on its home court, James emerged from his 48-point performance with an unquestionable killer instinct. And because he scored 29 of his team's final 30 points, he found himself smothered by Pistons defenders in Game 6. James simply displayed his deft touch as a leader, distributing the ball..."

* * *

Of course, James would also get hit hard after allegedly cracking up and refusing to take charge in their two losses during the conference championship.

But the question on whether he should have shot or passed in those forgettable games would instantly fizzle out.

"I have nothing to prove to anybody," James said. "I'm a leader of a group of guys who believe in my decisions down the stretch. Everybody has always criticized the way I play. But I'm a TEAM-FIRST guy. That's how the game of basketball should be played."

Simply put, James wanted it known that he had no intent whatsoever of being another Michael Jordan.

He also doesn't play the brand of ball-hog being perfected to extinction by Kobe Bryant.

The NBA man of the hour doesn't wag his tongue on the foul line or when taking a gleeful layup.

LeBron James instead incessantly gnaws at his fingernails, his big coal eyes darting, seeking for a chance to bestow heroism on nameless teammates.

In short, he was, pardon this, not the Filipino's idea of a basketball star.

But expect many new-born kids around here to be named after this very different NBA star.

* * *

(CORRECTION: Exactly a week today, the late sports editor Larry Galvez was inadvertently described here as having "intimidated how he owed his God a death." The right word should be "intimated." Sorry for the slip, and let's continue praying for the soul of this loyal friend. Sincerest thanks.)

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Dulce My Love (3), Astimegoesby (6), Song Bird (4), Richie Rich (5)

Race 2—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Sound of Silence (10), Spark (7), Jigsaw Star (2), Smiling Jaeda (1), Quick Play (4), Makati Haven (11)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—The Dominator (5), Archer (8), Guided Missile (3), Scarlet Velvet (4), Coat of Arms (7)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Heart of the Wind (3), Ambot Sa Imo (4), Jajie (5), Firehouse (7), Sandok (2)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Farragut's Order (8), EJ Forever (6), Defiant (9), Angie Gray (2), Manila Magic (3)

Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Daddy's Girl (11), Blue Sheikh (5), Romario (8), She Boom (12), Bull Knight (4), Rho Sig (3)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Refreshing (5), Graceful Conqueror (4), Sweet Peanut (8), Mister Cool (2), Scarlet Skyterror (9)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Weekend Master (14), Bumpy Johnson (7), Gonfelon Story (1), Dixie Dash (12), Ocean Cookie (10), Take Ten (9)

Spencer derby slated Friday in Makati

THE SPENCER 5-COCK DERBY ON FRIDAY AT THE MAKATI COLIseum will mark the second anniversary of the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. Veteran cocker-sportsman William Co will host the event in cooperation with fellow WTJ promoters Lito Orillaza and Rudy Salud and with B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador as sponsors. The winners will receive a guaranteed prize of P1 million. For submission of weights and inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

4 champion vying in SJC cockfest

FRESH OFF THEIR VICTORIES IN RECENT BIG DERBIES, FOUR champions will try to extend their streaks in the SJC International 8-Cock Derby slated June 11, 13 and 15 at the San Juan Coliseum. Backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, the three-day derby dangles a guaranteed prize of P5 million. Partners Gem Coronel and Wilson Ong of Pampanga, winners of the second leg of the 2007 World Slasher Cup last month, will join Makati Invitational champs Sam Mendoza and Ricky Valencia of Rizal in the stellar field.

RP volley . . .

From page A27

Sta. Maria discovered the talent from Bicol.

Police said that when he was shot, Borlagdatan was with his former La Salle-Dasmariñas teammates.

Pretending to be lawmen, the suspects barged into the house of one of the victims at the Villa Catalina Subdivision in Barangay San Agustin around 1:30 a.m. and told Borlagdatan's group that they needed to search the place.

When one of Borlagdatan's friends asked for a search warrant, the suspects announced the robbery and ordered the players and their friends to hand over their cell phones.

Police said the gunmen opened fire when the players tried to fight them off, killing Quine and Balesa instantly.

Borlagdatan dove for safety but took a bullet in the head, according to Sta. Maria. *With a report from Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

CRITICS call the 2012 Olympics logo "disintegrated" and "outrageous."

London Olympics logo draws flak

LONDON—DESIGN CRITICS DEscribed the jagged logo unveiled on Monday for London's 2012 Olympic Games as messy and dated with the most charitable saying it was brave but poorly executed.

The logo, four jigsaw-like pieces forming the numbers 2012 and coming in a range of colors from hot pink to electric blue, was saluted as innovative by Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee.

"(It was) an early indication of the dynamism, modernity and inclusiveness with which London 2012 will leave its Olympic mark," he said.

Design and advertising professionals were less enthused.

"The predominant emotional feel is more about a sense of disintegration. What I almost see is a map of London divided into boroughs," said Chris Bullar, who teaches creative advertising at the London College of Communication. "The 2012 is difficult at first sight to pick out."

Patrick Burgoyne, editor of Creative Review, a leading visual communication magazine, said people with whom he had spoken about the logo were "quite shocked and quite outraged."

Burgoyne said it was not likely to stand the test of time such as logos for past Games, such as Munich 1972, but he still found some positive elements in the design.

"It doesn't have Big Ben or a Union Jack or a crown on it, so the designers should be at least applauded for not going down the wearily predictable route," he said.

He also said the logo was well suited for the multi-media age, lending itself to animation and online display.

On newstoday.com, a popular online forum for designers, contributors registered their disappointment. *Reuters*

Roaring Rafa on a roll

Spanish hotshot sweeps Hewitt, gains quarters

PARIS—RAFAEL NADAL'S STROKES ARE ALways accompanied by lots of grunting, so the French Open must be more difficult than his results make it look.

Still unbeaten at Roland Garros, Nadal, who celebrates points with loud screams, completed the men's quarterfinal field Monday by sweeping Lleyton Hewitt, 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (5).

The two-time defending champion is 18-0 lifetime at the French Open, which seems to be getting easier for him: For the first time, he reached the final eight without losing a set.

"I played my best match of the tournament," Nadal said. "Lleyton is always a very good test and a very tough match, because he is a winner. I'm happy with my game today."

A potential showdown looms Sunday between the No. 2-seeded Nadal and top-ranked Roger Federer, who seeks his first French Open title to complete a career Grand Slam.

Nadal's opponent Wednesday will be fellow Spaniard Carlos Moya, the 1998 champion.

"I prefer to lose against him than against any other player because he is a great friend," Nadal said. "He did a lot of things for me when I arrived on the men's circuit."

Moya declined to take credit for Nadal's dominance: "I don't think he learned anything from me. And if he did, he did it much better than me."

The other quarterfinal Wednesday will be between No. 125-ranked Igor Andreev and No. 6-seeded Novak Djokovic.

Andreev, who eliminated No. 3-seeded Andy Roddick in the opening round, advanced to his first major quarterfinal by rallying past No. 16 Marcos Baghdatis, 2-6, 6-1, 6-3, 6-4. Djokovic swept unseeded Fernando Verdasco, 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (1), to reach the final eight for the second consecutive year.

"Last year, I honestly didn't expect to be in the quarterfinals," the 20-year-old Djokovic said. "I was pretty much satisfied with my achievement. This year is much different."

The marquee pairing in the women's quarterfinals Tuesday features two-time defending champion Justine Henin against eight-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams. It's a rematch of their contentious 2003 semifinal at Roland Garros.

Hewitt had beaten Nadal in four of their six previous meetings, but on clay the matchup of baseliners was a mismatch from the outset. Nadal won 16 of the first 20 points.

"He just hits the ball so much differently to anyone out there," Hewitt said. "His spin off his forehand—it's quite amazing. He can really work it over."

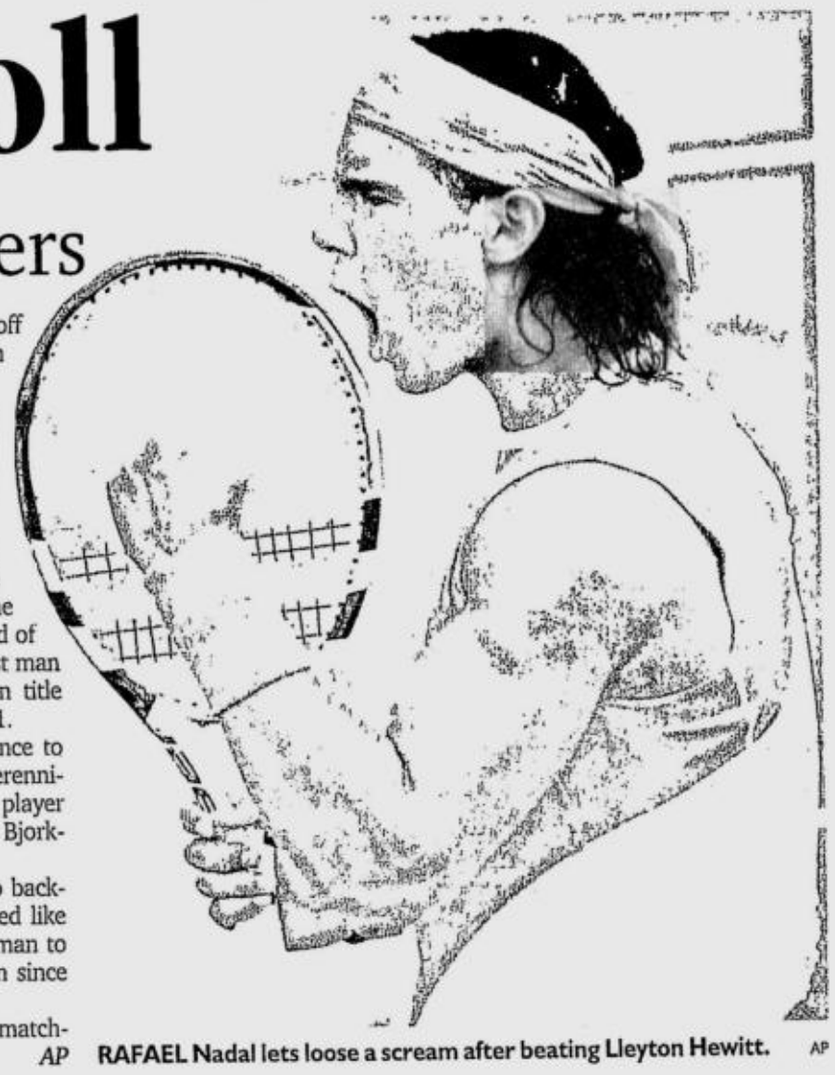
The No. 14-seeded Hewitt led for most of the third set and held advantages of 4-2 and 5-4 in the tiebreaker. But he blew an easy forehand to make it 5-all, then netted another easy forehand on the final point.

Nadal displayed racket wizardry even between points, when he drew applause for an over-the-shoulder catch on the strings of a ball lobbed from the other end of the court. He's bidding to become the first man to win a third consecutive French Open title since Bjorn Borg was champion in 1978-81.

Moya overcame his relative inexperience to beat Jonas Bjorkman. A Roland Garros perennial, Moya was nonetheless the younger player Monday, and he swept the 35-year-old Bjorkman, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 7-5.

Wearing a sleeveless shirt and his cap backward, the 30-year-old Moya hardly looked like an old-timer. But he became the oldest man to reach the final eight at the French Open since Andre Agassi in 2003.

Moya has won two of his previous five matches against Nadal. *AP*



RAFAEL Nadal lets loose a scream after beating Lleyton Hewitt. AP

THE NBA championship series between the San Antonio Spurs and the Cleveland Cavaliers will feature superstars Tim Duncan (left) and LeBron James. REUTERS, AP

Spurs all ready for NBA Finals vs 'sneaky' Cavs

LOS ANGELES—THE ONLY thing standing in the way of LeBron James and Cleveland's first National Basketball Association title is a seasoned San Antonio team that has won three championships in eight years.

Against long odds, Cleveland eliminated the Detroit Pistons in six games.

"They kind of snuck up on everybody," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said of Cleveland.

San Antonio, which won in each of its three previous trips to the finals in 1999, 2003, 2005, hosts the first game of best-of-seven finals on Thursday. Game Two is Sunday at the San Antonio arena.

"I'm not sure how rare they think it is since they've been there quite often considering their young ages and time in the league," Popovich said. "But they know it's the finals and that would take care of any possible complacency I would think."

To no one's great surprise San Antonio is in the 2007 finals but few outside of Cleveland expected the Cavaliers to be there.

That is until young superstar James took the bull by the horns, elevating Cleveland to a rarified level in his fourth season with the Cavs.

But along with his individual heroics, which included a jaw-dropping 48-point eruption in Game Five which featured him scoring the last 25 points of his team, James also has matured as a leader—one who has been more than willing to share the glory with his teammates.

"There is no way we would be here in the Eastern Conference finals or winning the Eastern Conference finals if it was a one-man show," he said.

"It's never happened in NBA history, it would never happen in the NBA where a team has one guy and he does it all."

James even drew praise on Monday from NBA legend Michael Jordan, who said James is showing signs of greatness.

"Making 'The Leap' is where you do it every single night," Jordan said. "It is expected of you and you do it. What just transpired was needed for the league, needed for Cleveland and needed for LeBron."

Said three-time finals MVP Duncan: "I'm just hoping every once in a while they throw the Spurs in there, in between the LeBron highlights, that would be nice."

Cleveland won both regular season matchups against San Antonio, including spoiling the Spurs' home opener. The teams met again in January in Cleveland where James scored 19 points in another win.

"We lost to them twice this season," Duncan said. "They're on a high right now, playing with a lot of confidence."

James led the Cavaliers to their first Eastern Conference title and now the possibility of the first championship in Cleveland in any sport since the gridiron Browns of the National Football League won the title in 1964.

Popovich warned against taking this series as a battle between two marquee names in the league.

"They wouldn't be in the finals without LeBron, we wouldn't be in the finals without Tim Duncan," Popovich said Sunday. "That goes without saying. But they still would not be in the finals, nor would we, if we didn't each have our supporting casts. Everybody else has to fit."

"Teams get to finals and teams win championships, and their team fits," he added.

SPORTS

Anton rules Hillclimb tilt for 14th title

BAGUIO ACE CARLOS ANTON ADDED another entry to his sterling racing career by ruling the first Philippine Hillclimb championship at the Mt. Samat Hill recently.

Though Anton finished only third overall in the final leg, it gave him enough points to claim the King of the Hill plum.

It was Anton's 14th national crown in 18 years of racing. His colorful portfolio includes three championships in slalom, two in karting, one each from rallycross/dirt trials and Formula Toyota and six from Formula Toyota series. He also has two autocross titles in Guam and boasts a victory in the GT Autocross race in Varano, Italy, in July 2004.

But his achievement in the Philippine Hill was his most memorable and challenging yet.

"I'm glad we clinched it," said Anton. "The computer box went off safe mode and I could only rev to 7500 rpms as against my usual 9000 rpms, so I am glad we got the points needed to win this title."

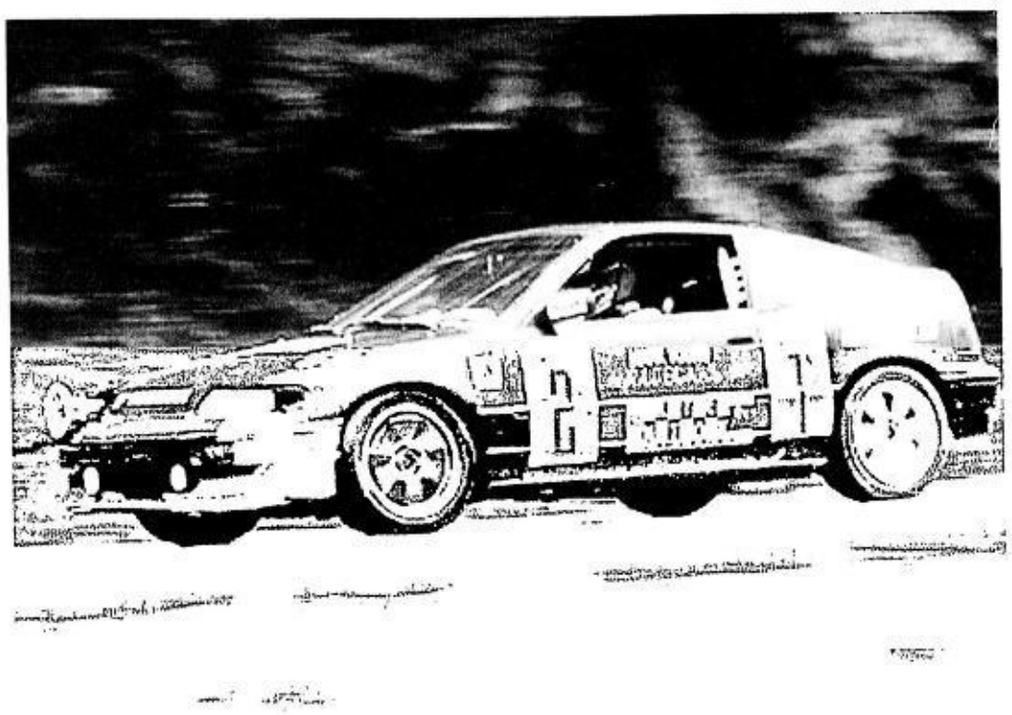
Jan de la Merced drove his Subaru STI to first place with Carlo Garcia in an Evolution 6 coming in second.

Anton was backed by Yokohama-Autoshack and Mark Young Racing Team.

"Anton lived up to expectation and he drove very professionally with the title always on mind," said Mark Young. "I think this partnership will get stronger as the years go by."

Anton's teammate Alvin Santos finished a whisker behind Anton in every leg, thus giving Anton the points protection he needed for the title.

Inquirer Sports Staff



CARLOS ANTON, expertly driving a Mark Young-sponsored Honda CRX, negotiates the tricky route en route to becoming the first Philippine Hillclimb champion.

RP pool bet misses 300

IT WAS TED ROBLES' TURN TO sizzle in the 36th PBC-Boysen International Open Tenpin Bowling championships at the SM Mall of Asia Bowling Centre late Monday night.

Robles, a national pool rookie, found his rhythm on lanes 9 and 10 and tried to zero in on a 300 score in the third game by bowling ten straight strikes using a 15-pound Strom Shift ball.

But like pool teammate Richie Poblete, the bespectacled 25-year-old who started poorly with a 168, fell short when he missed the 7 pin in the 11th game en route to a 289.

"The hook of my ball was not strong enough so I missed," said the Pasig Bowling Association team mainstay after missing the feat.

Robles closed out with a four-game tally of 936 and moved into third spot of the men's Open singles in a tie with fellow national pool member Tyrone Ongpauco and seven pins behind Poblete.

Nicodemus Valderama clung to top spot after bowling 936 earlier in the event backed by Timberpro.

"It would be excellent if a Filipino should score a perfect 300 in the PBC Open before the foreigners come," Philippine Bowling Congress executive vice president Jaime Dychauco said.

Sharing the spotlight on Day 3 of the tournament were veterans Jojo Canare and Bong Coo, also the PBC secretary general, as the Timberpro duo combined for a 785 to pace the ladies' Open double competitions.

They relegated the erstwhile top tandem of Apple Posadas and Marjo Reyes to second at 750 while Team-Prima's Trixie de Luna and Marjo Reyes were third with a 723 output.

Inquirer Sports Staff

NBC TOURNEY

Montana-Davao stuns Pagadian

DAVAO CITY—MONTANA PAWNshop-Davao stunned favored Pagadian, 94-90, on Monday in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the Almendras gym here.

Henry Fernandez spewed fire from the start as businessman Armando Quibod's Jewelers snapped a five-game losing streak in the tourney.

Fernandez shot 7-of-15 from the floor and sank 10 of his conference-high 13 free throws to lead all scorers with 28 points.

Junel Jawod and Tonyboy Espinosa ably backed Fernandez as the Jewelers posted their third win in 11 games.

Mayor Sammy Co's Explorers had five players in twin digits, but the Jewelers proved steadier at crunchtime.

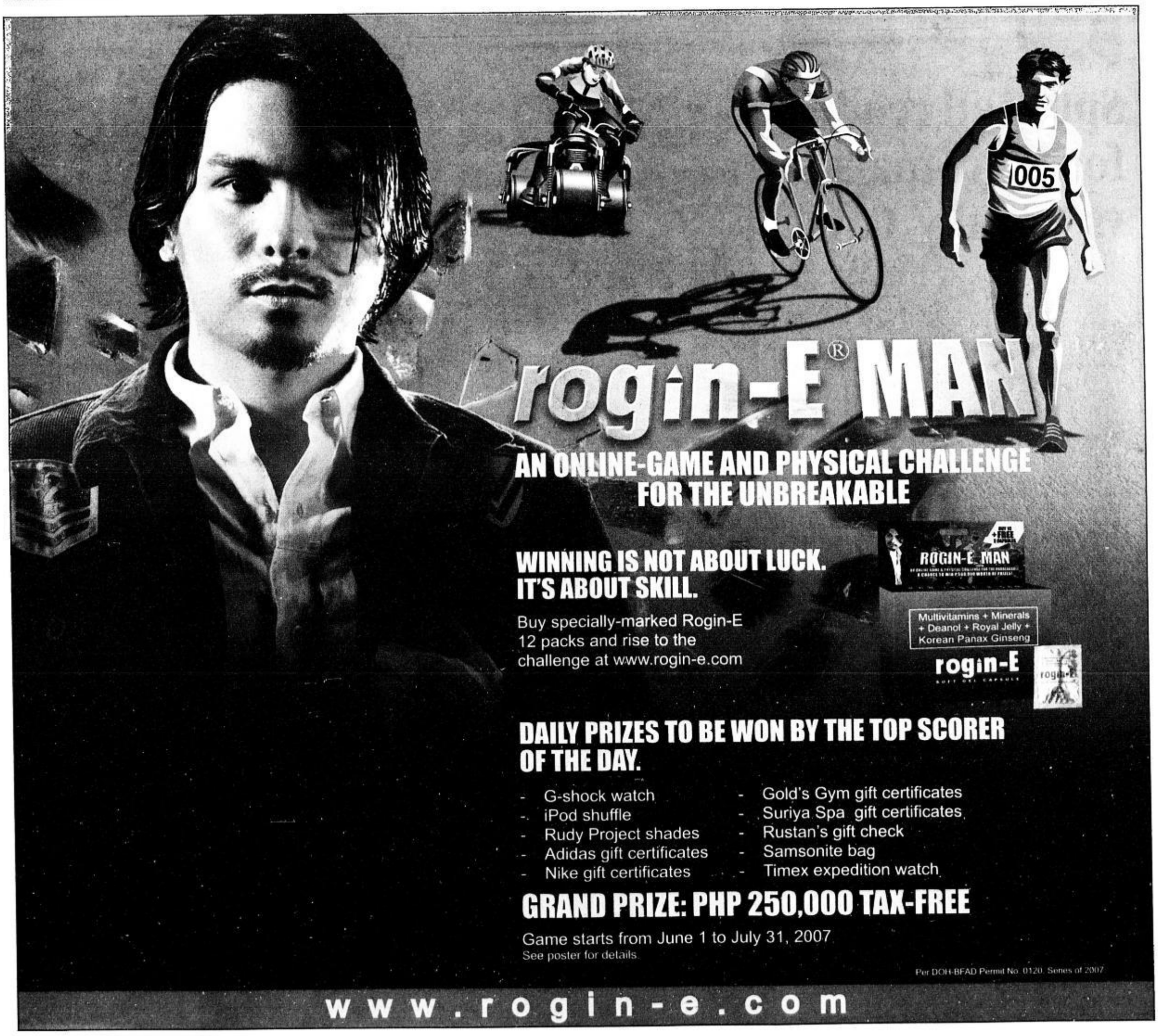
The league is being supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Yahoo Phils., San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Sun Cellular, Firefly Lightings, Trans Asia Shipping Lines, Molten, Nature's Spring Basketball TV and Viva Prime Channel.

The scores:

DAVAO 94—Fernandez 28, Jawad 12, Espinosa 12, Panorio 9, Araman 8, Hanga 7, Canlas 7, Abanes 6, Braga 5, Ayson 0, Lamocha 0

PAGADIAN 90—Daja 15, Orquillas 15, Saludsod 14, Quilo 12, Villaver 11, Sinco 5, Mamaclay 4, Singedas 4, Asaytono 4, Pamaran 2, Arquero 0, Huelar 0, Cortez 0, Ayuk 0, Naron 0

Quarters: 16-19, 39-39, 60-57, 94-90



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BUSINESS

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May inflation up but still within range

BSP: Rate may be higher at 2.4%, but poses no threat

By Michelle V. Remo

INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES SETTLED within the official forecast at 2.4 percent in May from the same period last year, as the stronger peso and absence of supply disruptions tempered the rise in the cost of food and other commodities.

The inflation figure for May was well within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' projected range of 2.1 to 2.8 percent.

The BSP had said weather conditions would not affect agricultural production, and that the rise in oil prices would be relatively benign.

"(Inflation in May) confirms the BSP's assessment of some short-lived pressure from El Niño and the creeping oil prices," BSP Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters. "We expect a continuing environment of low and stable inflation."

The May inflation rate was 0.1 percentage point higher than the 2.3 percent recorded in April, and brought the average inflation rate for the first five months of the year to 2.7 percent. The average was still relatively benign and did not threaten the BSP's full-year target of 4 to 5 percent.

Core inflation, which factors out volatile prices of selected food and energy items, remained at 2.6 percent, the same rate posted in March and April.

According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), all commodity groups—except fuel, light and water (FLW)—recorded a slowdown in inflation.

Inflation rate for food, beverage and tobacco (FBT) decelerated to 2.6 percent in May from 2.8 percent in April, while that for clothing hit 2.5 percent from the previous month's 2.6 percent.

Inflation rate for services slowed down to 1.9 percent from 2.3 percent, while that for miscellaneous items eased to 1.6 percent from 1.7 percent.

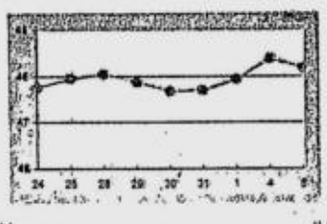
Housing and repairs registered a 1.4-percent inflation rate, similar to the April figure. But FLW posted a faster rate of 4 percent from only 2.2 percent the previous month.

For food alone, inflation rate eased to 2.6 percent from 2.7 percent. This took into account the following food items: Rice (which registered a 1.5-percent inflation rate), corn (3.7 percent), dairy products (3.8 percent), fish (3.1 percent), miscellaneous food (2.3 percent), egg (6.3 percent), fruits and veg-

MAY INFLATION/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



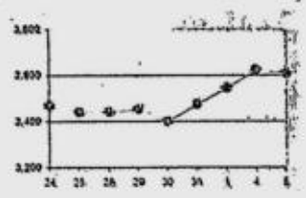
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 45.83 = $1

As of 5 p.m., June 5, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares fall 0.40%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.40 percent lower as profit-taking took hold after a three-day rally that took the market to record highs, dealers said. Investors were also keeping an eye on China's stock markets, where sentiment

SHARES/ B3

VICE President Noli De Castro and Benjamin Philip Romualdez (left and center) study the mineral samples on display at the 7th Asia'Pacific Mining Conference exhibit at the Makati Shangri-La in Makati City. INQUIRER PHOTO/RUDY ESPERAS

From beverages, SMC now wants to dip its hand in mining

SAN MIGUEL CORP., SOUTHEAST ASIA'S largest food and drinks firm, wants to explore for iron, gold and copper in Mindoro province, according to a senior government official.

Angelo Reyes, environment and natural resources secretary, said that the company had already filed an application for exploration rights in the province believed to contain gold and nickel reserves.

San Miguel recently announced it would seek new growth engines by investing in non-allied ventures such as power, infrastructure and mining, after dominating the home market for beer, liquor, dairy, poultry and processed food.

"San Miguel is looking at doing some exploration work in Mindoro," Reyes said. "This will be for iron, gold, copper."

Ramon Ang, San Miguel president, has filed for a mineral exploration authority, along with a sister firm of San Miguel, said Horacio Ramos, director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Ang has personal investments in other sectors such as cement, and is part of a consortium that tried to bid for the Philippines' national electricity grid in February.

San Miguel previously said it would raise its capital stock to 7.5 billion shares equivalent to about P37.5 billion ($822 million), from the present 4.5 billion shares, to raise funds for its new ventures, pay down debt and finance a possible share buyback.

During the 7th Asia-Pacific Mining Conference and Exhibition, Reyes also announced that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has approved an additional 11 mineral agreements and exploration permits, which are expected to generate at least P225 million in investments over the next two years.

The newly approved projects include six mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) and five exploration permits (EPs).

Hard Rock Mineral Trading Inc. received its MPSA for the exploration and development of nickel and cobalt deposits in Zamboanga City.

East Coast Mineral Resources Co. Inc. received two separate MPSAs for its nickel,

FROM BEVERAGES / B3

Foreign currency deposits on the rise

FOREIGN-CURRENCY DENOMINATED deposits posted a double-digit growth in April from the same month a year ago, marking the rise of capital inflows into the country, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

Deposits made to the foreign currency deposit units (FCDUs) of banks hit $18.148 billion in April—a 16.6-percent increase from the $15.564 billion recorded in the same month last year.

On a month-on-month basis, the latest amount of deposits in foreign currencies was 0.4 percent higher than the $18.077 billion recorded in March.

The government's economic managers claimed that the rising inflows of capital signaled that the country was already regaining confidence of investors brought on by its improving macroeconmic fundamentals.

The Philippine economy, as measured by its gross domestic product, grew 6.9 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier. It was its strongest performance in 17 years.

The Arroyo administration has also cited its improving fiscal condition, marked by a reduction in the budget deficit, as key to winning investor confidence.

The rise in foreign capital inflows and growth in remittances from overseas Filipino workers are credited for the increase in FCDU deposits and the strengthening of the peso to record-high levels.

But although the rise in the inflow of foreign capital and OFW remittances has the benefit of boosting aggregate demand and eventually economic growth, it has the downside of beefing up liquidity in the system.

The BSP has raised its concern earlier over growing domestic liquidity,

FOREIGN/ B3

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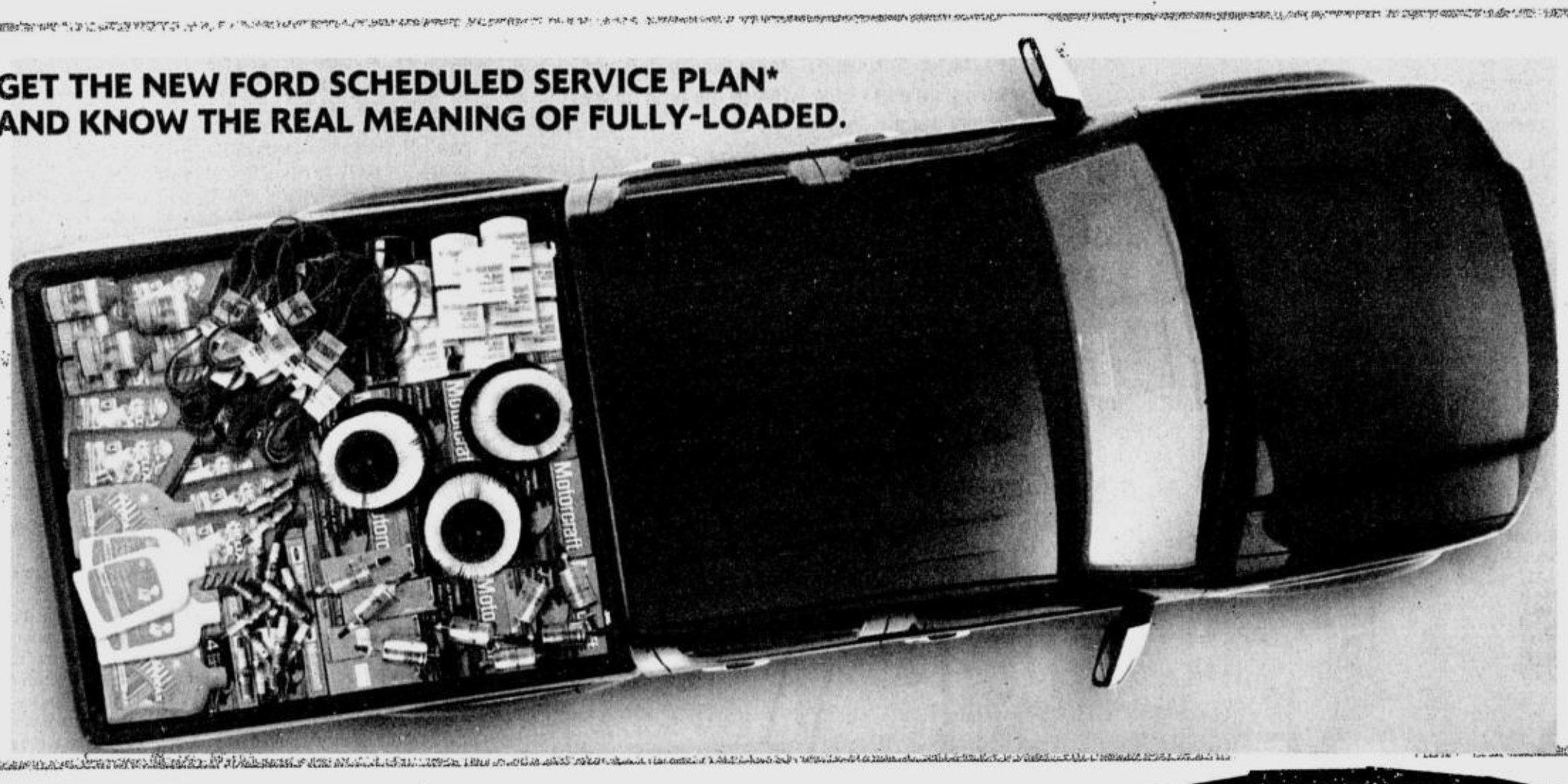

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7-yr T-bond rate up 52.7 points

Rate increase due to availability of investment alternatives

By Michelle V. Remo

THE 7-YEAR TREASURY BOND rate rose by more than half a percentage point yesterday, which fiscal authorities attribute to the emergence of competition in the financial market.

The 7-year bonds fetched 6.508 percent yesterday, up 52.7 basis points from its previous rate of 5.981 percent.

The volume of bids reached P10.6[illegible] billion, more than double the offering of P5 billion.

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted P5 billion worth of bids, raising in full the government's programmed borrowing for the auction.

Analysts said there was still considerable appetite for the long-term bonds, given the high level of liquidity in the system. However, they said the government's bargaining power was adversely affected by its fiscal performance in the first four months of the year, which was marked by less-than-expected tax collection.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, who acts as officer-in-charge of the BTr while the government was still searching a new national treasurer, said the rate increase was due to availability of investment alternatives.

He said the move of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to allow trust departments of banks to directly deposit to the central bank posed tough competition to government securities.

The BSP's move was among the measures adopted to mop up excess liquidity in the system.

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Mayor Lim: What to do with Intramuros

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

ON JUNE 24, 1571, CONQUISTAdor Miguel Lopez de Legazpi formally founded the city of Manila, and called it "The Distinguished and Ever Loyal City."

With his five-ship flotilla, Legazpi had sailed from Mexico and arrived off Samar on Feb. 20, 1566. He carried three orders from King Philip II: To find a return route across the Pacific to Mexico, look for gold and colonize the islands.

As soon as he arrived in Cebu, Legazpi sent one of his ships to look for the return route. Two years later, the ship came back to report that the return route had been found off Japan. Having attained the first objective, the colonization of the islands could then proceed in earnest.

He first settled in Cebu, and then moved to what is now Roxas City. He finally chose Manila as his base of operations. He persuaded Rajah Sulayman to cede what was to be also known as "The Christian City."

Legazpi started building Intramuros, The Walled City. But he died on Aug. 20, 1572. His successors finished the project. Intramuros became the strongest fortress in Southeast Asia. Inside the walls, the Spaniards built barracks, depots, stately residences for top officials, churches, convents, seminaries and schools. The most imposing edifices were the Governor-General's palace, or *Ayuntamiento*, and The Cathedral.

In all its glory, Intramuros was the first western-style city in the Far East. It preceded Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur.

The best known of the fortifications is Fort Santiago, guarding the mouth of the Pasig River. It is also the site of the worst atrocity committed by the Japanese occupation forces. Some 600 Filipinos and Americans suffocated in the dungeon.

Rizal's Fort Santiago cell, where he wrote his Ultimo Adios, is a shrine by itself.

In the battle for the Liberation of Manila in February-March 1945, American artillery reduced Intramuros to rubble. To this day, it has not been fully rebuilt. It remains a terrible scar in Manila's landscape.

What should be done? First, the squatter colony, which is a disgrace to Manila, should be relocated. Surely, Mayor Lim should be able to find a decent place for the squatters to live in.

In Fort Santiago, a museum should be built, patterned after the Visitor's Center in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. (A committee should be sent to Gettysburg to see how the battlefield has been preserved as a national monument.)

The main feature of the center will be a miniature replica of Intramuros in all its past glory, as well as replicas of the environs of Binondo, Tondo, Santa Cruz, Sampaloc, Malate and Ermita. There should be a gallery of governor-generals and archbishops, of heroes and scoundrels.

A 15-minute historical film from the blood compact between Legazpi and Sikatuna to the destruction in 1945 should be screened regularly in a small theater.

Fort Santiago and the walls should be declared a national monument to be left untouched forever. The golf course should be dug up and the moats restored.

The Comelec and the Department of Labor and Employment should be relocated to Quezon City where they belong.

Towering over the entire landscape, a new 50-story Manila City Hall, with a large parking lot should be built. The present City Hall is hopelessly outdated and overcrowded.

There will be enough space left for a huge shopping mall that will outshine anything now in existence.

Then, Intramuros will again be the centerpiece of the Philippines. And Mayor Lim will go down in history not as Dirty Harry. Alfredo the Great, maybe?

Napocor to revise procurement policies

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER COMING UNDER FIRE for allegedly purchasing coal at very high prices, National Power Corp. will be revising its procurement procedures, particularly in the areas of fuel management, supplies and logistics.

Napocor president Cyril del Callar said the agency would make adjustments and refinements in its procurement procedures to make them more customer-focused.

The agency decided to make the move following its review of existing procurement policies and procedures.

The adjustments will be based on and will consider the provisions of laws and regulations governing the agency, he added.

To be given emphasis, he said, would be Napocor's existing budget-setting formula—especially in determining the buying price, as well as its stock or inventory level policies, and mandatory rebidding requirements.

Del Callar said it was also important to streamline and shorten the state firm's bidding process, without sacrificing transparency and compliance with government procurement rules.

He said there should be a good balance between fuel procured via the spot market and those bought under long-term contracts.

While long-term contracts were good during periods of rising prices, he said these were disadvantageous when contracted prices were higher than current levels.

In an earlier interview, he said the state firm was recommending changing the procurement mix from the current even split between coal purchased on the spot market and those attached to long-term contracts.

He said Napocor also proposed to extend the coverage of long-term contracts to beyond three years.

Napocor fuel management department manager Marilou dela Cruz said the state firm was also thinking of changing the pricing scheme for its long-term contracts to reflect market prices which move every week.

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4 firms rise up to answer MRT 7 'Swiss challenge'

By Riza T. Olchondra

FOUR COMPANIES HAVE SIGNIFIED THEIR INtent to take on the so-called "Swiss challenge" for the MRT 7 project, according to a Department of Transportation and Communications official.

The government hopes to award the project by the end of the year, said Guiling Mamondiong, DOTC undersecretary for rail.

"Four entities got the bid documents and would submit their respective bids on June 25," Mamondiong told the INQUIRER. "Their technical and financial reports will be reviewed first, and the best qualifying bid will have to be matched by the original proponent, which is Universal LRT Corp. Ltd. (ULC), in 30 days. Otherwise the best challenger will get the job."

Under a Swiss challenge, a firm is afforded the chance to match the offer of the highest bidder. The DOTC official declined to reveal who the challengers are.

MRT 7 is a 23-km rail line that will run along Commonwealth Avenue, Regalado Avenue and Qurino Avenue Extension up to San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. It will have 14 stations and connect to the North Edsa station of MRT 3.

ULC managing director and chief executive Eli Levin earlier said that his firm is ready for the competing bids and that he doubts whether its $1.235-billion proposal will be matched.

ULC has already posted a performance bond of $1.9 billion and submitted documents to the government, affirming that it is deficit-neutral status, and has an internal rate of return of 11.7 percent. Its bid also has a real estate component for residential and commercial areas, including a new mall in Bulacan.

"There will be a $309-million equity investment and $926-million debt financing," Levin said.

A number of foreign banks have already expressed interest in facilitating the loan.

On the real estate component, the consortium plans to construct 2,500 residential units and 300 office units every year on 174 ha of land in Bulacan. Universal LRT will also build a 22-km access road and 20-ha bus and train depot.

Fares for the rail line, designed to decongest the East Avenue and Commonwealth corridor, will be pegged at an average of P27, and will go up every year.

Under the proposed contract, government will support the MRT 7 project by advancing $108 million to Universal LRT for 10 years.

May inflation up ...

From page B1

etables (2.9 percent), meat (2.7 percent) and cereal preparations (3.4 percent)

The peso closed at 46.3 against the US dollar in May, stronger than the 52.86 finish in the same month last year. A stronger peso makes imported goods cheaper, which helps slow down overall inflation.

Victo Abola, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific, said the increase in consumer prices in May was also a result of higher demand by households and increase in government spending for the elections.

With the end of election-related spending, Abola said, inflation may post more benign rates in June and July.

But he said inflation could pick up in the second half, when companies normally schedule their importation. Abola said inflation could settle at an average of between 3 to 3.2 percent for the full year.

Abola said that, with inflation kept at benign levels, the BSP need not tighten its monetary policy, and instead leave more room for higher consumer demand and faster economic growth.

From beverages ...

From page B1

cobalt, chromite and iron development in Loreto, Surigao del Norte, and another project involving in Libjo, Surigao del Norte.

Holcim Philippines Inc. was granted the right to explore for limestone in La Union, while Apex Mining Co. Inc. would get to develop gold, copper, silver and zinc resources in Compostela Valley. Berong Nickel Corp. received its MPSA for a project in Palawan.

The recipients of EPs were Ivanhoe Philippines Inc., Colossal Mining Corp., and Norte de Oro Mining and Industrial Corp.

About P196 million in investments are expected from the initial exploration activities of the six new MPSAs, while almost P29 million in initial exploration funds have been allocated for the five new EPs.

Six of these 11 new projects have foreign partners. *Amy R. Remo, with a report from Reuters*

Foreign currency ...

From page B1

which it said could put the government's inflation targets at risk if left unresolved.

For this reason, the BSP last month opened a facility whereby trust departments of banks could directly park their funds with the central bank. The BSP also offered special interest rates for government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) that would deposit their investable funds to the central bank.

The interest rates offered to the GOCCs are higher than rates on government securities with comparable maturity. This measure was meant to siphon off excess liquidity in the system and help ensure that the government's inflation target would be met.

The BSP earlier reported that money supply, as measured by the M3, grew 26.3 percent in April from a year ago. Authorities said a comfortable level of growth in domestic liquidity is anything less than 20 percent. Otherwise, inflation targets may be breached. *Michelle V. Remo*

Shares fall 0.40%

From page B1

remained shaky after recent sharp falls, they added.

The composite index closed 14.8 points lower at 3,608.14 after moving between 3,594.02 and 3,622.94.

The all-share index fell 7.38 points to 2,296.01.

There were 62 decliners and 53 advancers, while 53 stocks were unchanged.

Volume amounted to 4.46 billion shares

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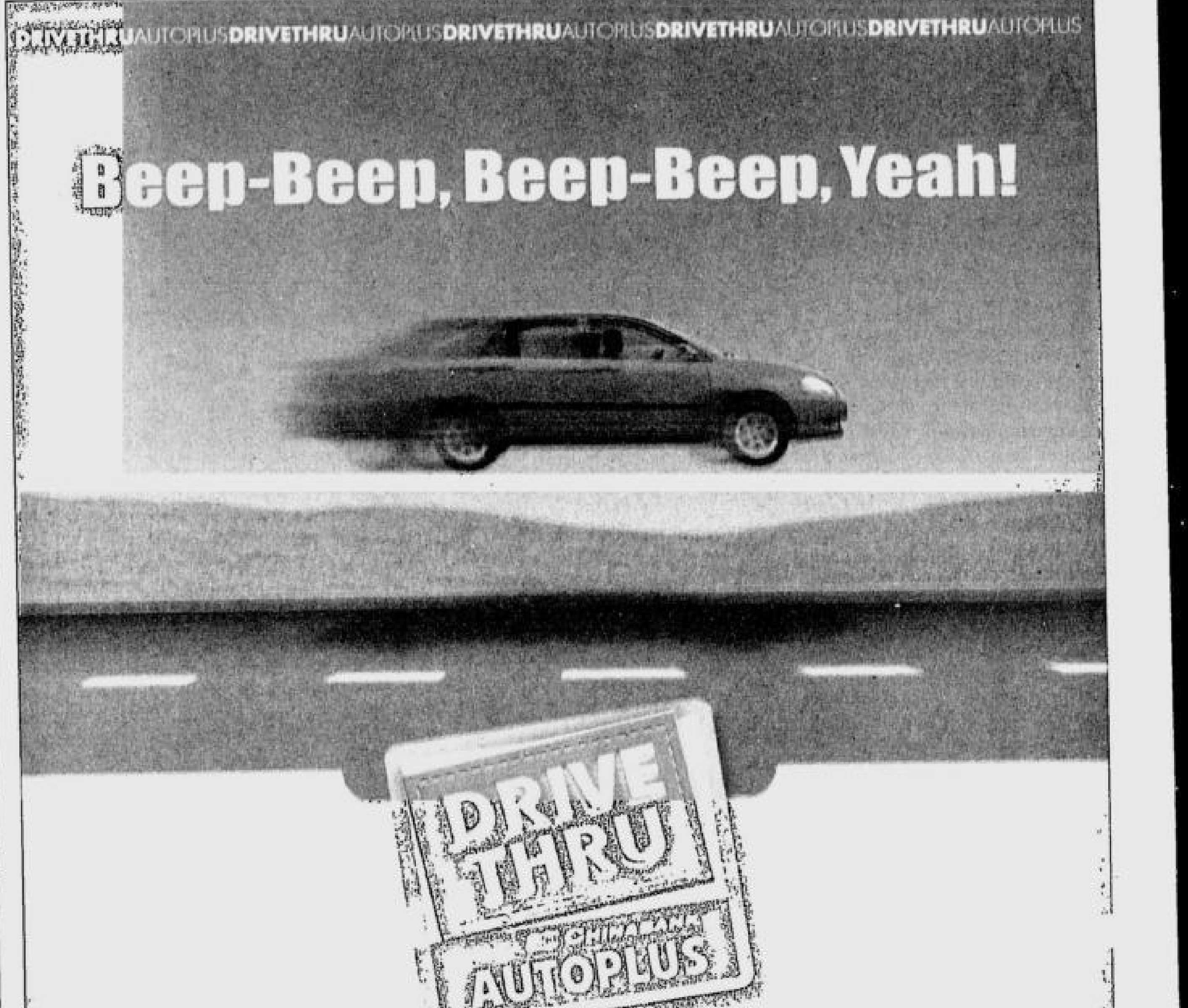

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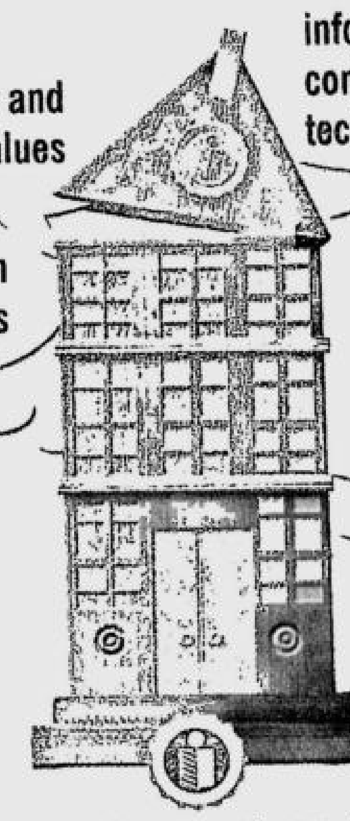

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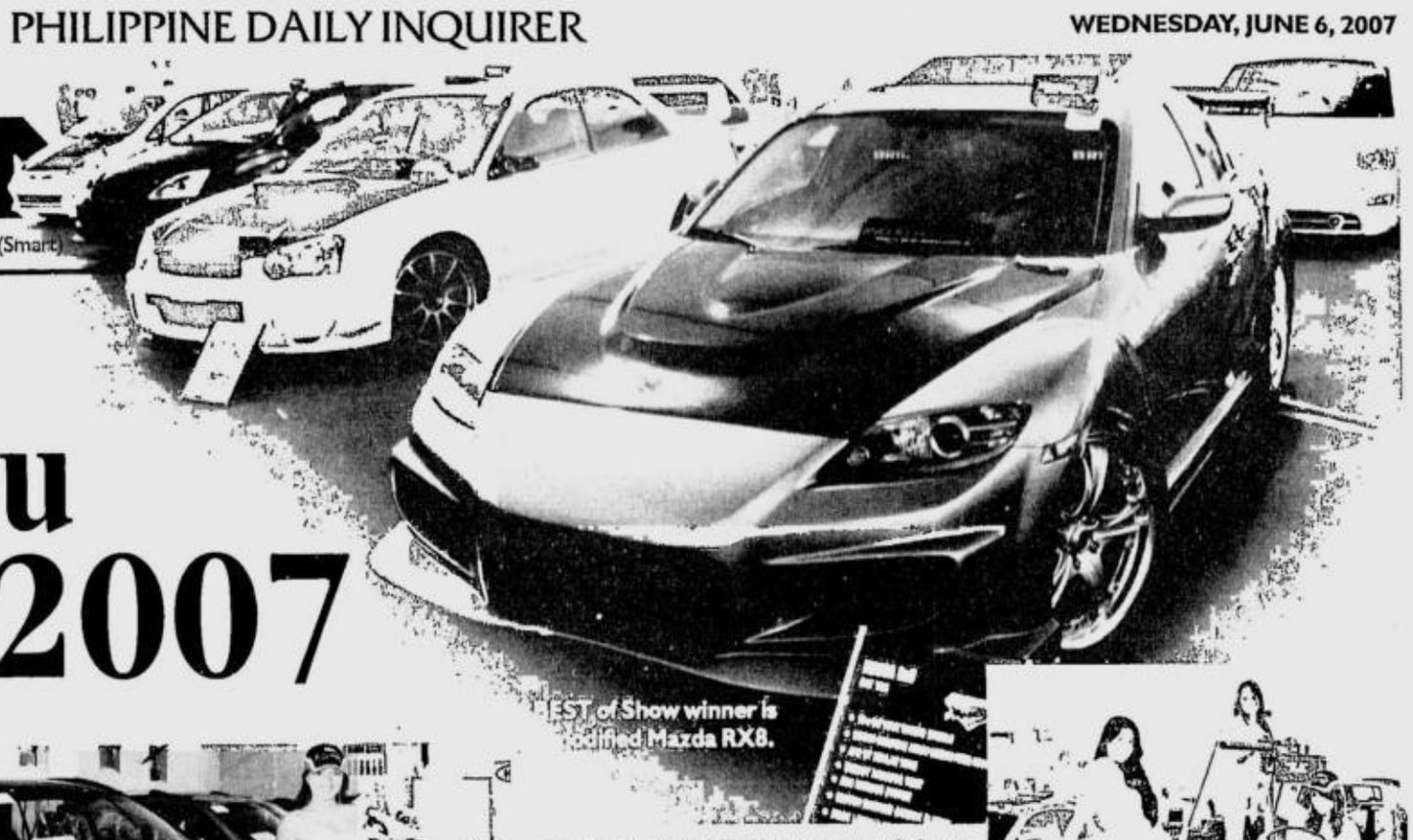

BEST of Show winner is modified Mazda RX8.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

A look at Cebu Auto Show 2007

Text and photos by Alvin Uy
(Contributor)

ALL ROADS LED TO AYALA Center Cebu as Worldbex held its second Cebu Auto Show last weekend. In the Ayala open parking lot, a custom-built air-conditioned tent provided the venue with more than 3,000 square meters in covered floor area.

Aside from the car brands and accessories that exhibited in the show, a car competition was held two days prior to the show. All the seven category winners in the competition including the most coveted Best of Show winner were also displayed in the exhibition area.

Winners

A modified Mazda RX8 bagged top honors as Best of Show winner and as Best Japanese Sports Car while another notable winner was a pristine World War II McArthur Jeep that was meticulously restored by its owner.

The jeep came complete with a turret machine gun and other military accessories sourced from various parts of the world. It has been with the owner's family for more than half a century and during its restoration, they purposely left a hole on its metal sheet floor made by a bayonet by a G.I. soldier during the war. This battle-scarred show entry was a surprise winner during the competition.

HYUNDAI display

Fighting back

In a province where there are second-hand grey market dealers in almost every street corner of Metro Cebu, the formal auto industry is fighting back by actively supporting automotive events like the Cebu Auto Show. A few months ago, BPI and Equitable Bank held auto loan mall tours encouraging new vehicle sales.

Among the automotive brands that participated in the Cebu Auto Show 2007 were Chevrolet, Hyundai, Kia, Mazda, Maxxis, Microtex, Mobil, Mothers, Motolite, Motul, Nankang, Pirelli, Suzuki, Total, Top Gear, Toyota and Yamaha.

Organizers of the Cebu Auto Show are the same group behind the recently concluded Manila International Auto Show (MIAS 2007), which brought in world-famous stunt performer Russ Swift from the United Kingdom. Andrew Bello, marketing manager of Total Philippines, commended the organizers for being able to elevate MIAS to a show of international taste and decided to co-sponsor their events.

Looking forward

The demand for motor vehicles is quite strong in this region particularly with a robust export economy as well as good influx of OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances. Aside from a strong export industry, Cebu is also a hub for high-quality furniture, which is not surprising that the custom cars that participated in the show competition have very good paint finishes.

Encouraged by the thousands of visitors that went to see the show, the organizers are looking forward to next year's show which is expected sometime in summer.

ONE of the models of the Yamaha booth even looks like the firm's famous endorser.

A RESTORED World War II McArthur Jeep is complete with artillery.

iRAP: Making roads safe

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA—FOR US Philippine motorists, the most exciting news coming from the 2007 Conference Week of the FIA here is that iRAP may finally reach our country.

iRAP (International Road Assessment Program) supports the Make Roads Safe campaign of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the Paris-based global organization that is better known for governing motor sports such as Formula One and the World Rally Championship. As the only FIA member club in the Philippines, Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) was invited to send delegates to 2007 Conference Week, thus this column.

High-risk roads

iRAP does for roads what the NCAP (New Car Assessment Program) has done for cars, in this case targeting high-risk roads where large numbers are killed and seriously injured, and inspecting them to identify where affordable programs of safety engineering—from pedestrian crossings to safety fences—could reduce the number of fatalities and casualties.

Of the 1.2 million people who die and of the 50 million who are injured or permanently disabled in road accidents annually, more than 85 percent occur in developing countries. Because of iRAP, road deaths in high-income countries are expected to fall between 2000 and 2020, but they are likely to increase by more than 80 percent in the rest of the world. Working with the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society and the World Bank, iRAP has reduced the annual death toll in Europe, the United States and Australia. In the United Kingdom, half the high-risk roads have been eliminated.

iRAP model

The question is whether the developed country iRAP model will work in developing countries. There are still many countries in which fundamental road safety education and enforcement (seatbelts, helmets, drink-drive and general adherence to traffic regulations) are not in place. In these countries, basic infrastructure such as clear signs and road markings is needed if road users are to know what they are expected to do and if the police are to effectively enforce traffic laws.

Moreover, in many developing countries including the Philippines, occupants of privately owned buses, converted pickup trucks and minibuses are at high risk in run-off crashes, intersection crashes and head-on collisions.

Pedestrians

Aside from these, pedestrians account for between 40 and 75 percent of all road deaths, mainly while crossing a road where safe crossing facilities are not provided and walking along the road where there are no footpaths or sidewalks. Motorcyclists and moped riders also figure in a high percentage of road deaths, especially in Asia where up to 70 percent of all road deaths are motorcyclists or moped riders.

iRAP has been organizing in five developing countries to make roads safe and thus save lives. In pilot projects in Malaysia, South Africa, Costa Rica and Chile early this year, road inspections were led by the local automobile club and an established RAP team (EuroRAP, AusRAP and usRAP). The projects were supported by research institutions, governments and road safety organizations with iRAP providing training, manuals and web tools to build and sustain national capacity.

Process

The iRAP process involves five steps:

1) Define the road network where fatal and serious injuries are likely to be concentrated;

2) Inspect roads and identify serious deficits in infrastructure;

3) Generate affordable, large-scale countermeasure packages; 4) Estimate costs, casualty reduction benefits and scale of economic return; and,

5) Recommend high-potential network safety upgrading program and action.

The inspection method used to assess roads can be done manually by using "drive through" inspections with rating completed on specialized equipment and using video collection and laboratory scoring.

Rates of return

Affordable road infrastructure improvements can cut road casualties on a significant national scale in the short, medium and long term. But this is only possible if whole roads and networks on which large numbers of deaths and serious injuries have taken place are targeted systematically with the application of effective countermeasures. Rates of return are high, rarely less than 100 percent per year and often much higher.

Building on the strengths of the pilot project in Malaysia, iRAP plans to focus on the Asia Highway and implement more developing country programs. A high-level meeting may be held next year in Malaysia to show the banks how iRAP succeeded there and thus generate funding for iRAP projects in the Philippines and Singapore with the national auto club in each country providing the initiative. In the Philippines, the Asian Development Bank and Road Tax Fund are likely sources of funding, according to AAP director David Arcenas, who also attended Conference Week.

Nissan holding 'Imagination Factory' design forum

NISSAN MOTOR CO. LTD. HAS BEGUN IMparting its culture of advanced automotive design through a series of design forums titled the "Imagination Factory," a first for an automotive manufacturer. The design forums aspire to tell the story of how the company's designers derive inspiration from their living environment, personal values and vision to drive their design works.

Starting in Singapore in August 2006, "Imagination factory" has made its way to various countries in Asia, most recently Taiwan. Yulon Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. recently hosted the event at Eslite Bookstore in Taipei. The Taipei design forum included panel discussions between Nissan designers and local designers from various fields, and a workshop for design students. Yulon proudly houses one of Nissan's six design studios worldwide.

Design forum in RP

By the last quarter of the year, the "Imagination Factory" will find its way to our shores through the joint efforts of Nissan Motors Philippines Inc. and Universal Motors Corp. It will showcase Nissan's design philosophy and the creative development process involved in designing a car. Revel in the beauty of the 350Z and the exquisite styling of the Murano, exemplary automotive designs that surpass a person's imagination and expectation.

The "Imagination Factory" is also aimed at encouraging students who want to pursue a career in car or industrial design, as well as raise public interest in automotive design. The exhibition will be opened to the public to provide visitors with a sense and feel of Nissan's design studios.

SKETCH of 2005 GTR

SKETCH of Murano

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MOTORSCOPE

Reader's Digest Trusted Brands awardee

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES INC. WAS SELECTed as 2007 Reader's Digest Trusted Brands Gold awardee under the car category. In an awarding ceremony held at the Peninsula Manila Hotel, HCPI and other Trusted Brands winners were recognized by Reader's Digest as market leaders in their respective fields.

Since 1999, Honda has been a consistent Trusted Brands awardee. "This would not have been possible without the continuous trust and patronage of our beloved consumers," Honda Cars Philippines VP Marketing Arnel Doria said.

He added, "We are deeply grateful for nine years of constant recognition and continuous trust in our brand. We are truly honored and your confidence in us drives Honda in providing world-class vehicles and services, and in working toward ultimate customer satisfaction."

Winners of Reader's Digest survey have been voted by readers of Reader's Digest in seven Asian markets namely Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines. In partnership with Nielsen Media Research, world leader in media research and analysis, Reader's Digest Asia sent over 300,000 questionnaires and conducted 3,500 phone interviews. Twenty-two percent of questionnaire respondents and 14 percent of phone interview sample came from the Philippines.

Consumers were asked to name their single most trusted brand among 43 categories of products and services, and then rate the brand based on six factors: trustworthiness, credible image, quality, value, understanding of customer needs and innovation.

A victory for a greener motor sport

VOLVO ORIGINAL RACING WON THE FIRST leg of the Swedish Touring Car Championship—the STCC—at Sturup Raceway in Skåne.

Through its success the other weekend, Volvo, one of the very first manufacturers to officially adopt the eco-friendly E85 fuel in the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile's global Super 2000 product technical regulations, also became the first make in the world to win on ethanol power.

The race got off to a smooth start. Robert Dahlgren took the lead from the word go. During the first part of the race he had Johan Sturesson's Peugeot snapping at his heels, and was later followed bumper to bumper by Fredrik Ekblom, BMW. But nobody was fast enough to get by.

The Volvo team had to make a quick decision and decided on an early pit-stop. Once the competition decided to call in for pit-stops too, things got decidedly hot for a number of laps.

Toward the end, there was no doubt that Robert was going to be wearing the victor's laurels. His virtually perfect driving meant he simply kept a firm hold of his lead. His closest competitor, Jan Nilsson in a BMW, crossed the finishing line 4 seconds later.

In Manila, Viking Cars Inc. is the official distributor of Volvo cars. The Volvo Makati office, showroom and Aftersales Service Center are located at 2272 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City while Volvo Ortigas Center is located at 88 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

DMIA seen handling 2M tourists with 'open skies'

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE DIOSDADO Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) could handle close to half of the country's targeted tourist arrivals by 2010, providing a big boost to the local economy as well as spurring development in the airport's immediate vicinity.

For this to happen, however, the government must ease access restrictions on foreign carriers that are presently stunting the growth of the travel industry.

This projection was made by Subic-Clark Alliance for Development chairman Edgardo D. Pamintuan who made a pitch for the so-called "open skies" policy amid the growing debate over the future of DMIA as an international airline hub. "Based on a projected 20-percent annual growth rate, DMIA can reach one million by 2010," he said at a forum of open skies advocates. "It can even reach two million."

The government hopes to attract as many as 3.1 million foreign tourists by the end of this year, and as many as five million by the end of 2010, under a plan set forth by the Department of Tourism.

If proven correct, Pamintuan's forecast could mean DMIA handling as much as 40 percent of all inbound tourist traffic into the country in three years.

Last year, the airport handled a total of 471,000 passengers on board 50 flights per week.

Already, DMIA experienced one of the fastest growth rates in terms of tourist arrivals anywhere in the world, due main-

DMIA SEEN/ B7

Air Canada eyes RP flight

By Riza T. Olchondra

AIR CANADA IS considering flying to the Philippines.

Air Canada said serving the Vancouver-Manila route was one of its prospects but definite plans may be in place only after 2010.

Airline president and CEO Martie Brewer said in a briefing that the commercial availability of the Boeing 787 around 2010 may encourage the Canadian flag carrier to fly to Manila.

"We always see the Philippines as a potential destination. But the nearest opportunity may be in 2010 onwards, when the 787 enables efficient long-haul operations to destinations such as the Philippines," Brewer said.

"The aircraft may be tested this year and may be available by 2010, and from there it may make financial sense for us to serve the route," he added.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner is a mid-sized, wide-body, twin-engined jet airliner, which is scheduled to enter commercial service by May 2008.

The aircraft can carry between 210 and 330 passengers depending on the seating configuration.

Boeing has stated that the 787 is lightweight due to the use of composite material and will be more fuel-efficient than comparable earlier Boeing aircraft.

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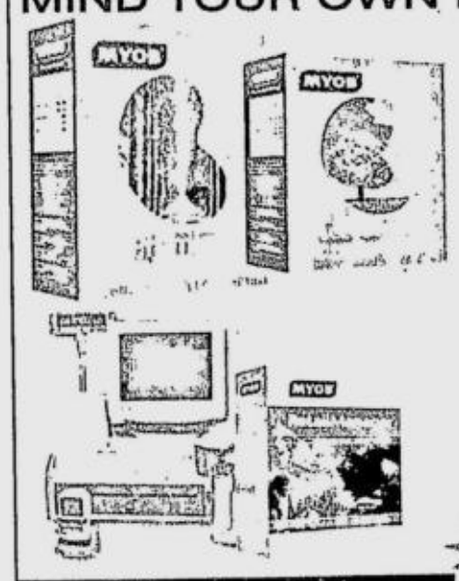

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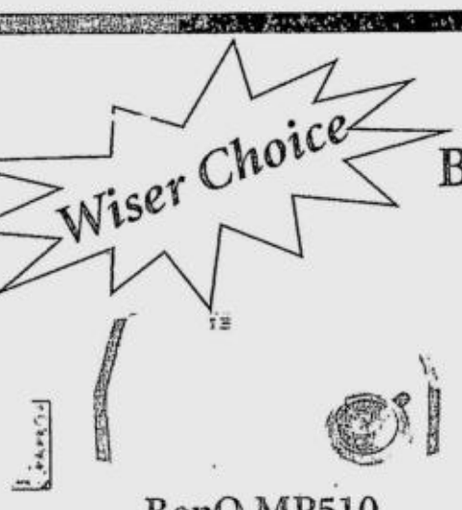

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HOUSING BODY AGAIN RECOGNIZED CITYLAND AS LEADING CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPER

Cityland further fortifies it niche in the condominium development market by winning again the Leading Condominium Developer Award. In the government's latest awarding rites held on May 24, 2007, Dr. Andrew I. Liuson, President of Cityland is shown receiving the award for the 2007 Leading Developer in Open Market Condominium for both the ENCR and National levels from Vice-President Noli De Castro, Chairman of HUDCC witnessed by Commissioner Romulo Q. Fabul of HLURB.

Cityland has pioneered the industry in providing affordable condominium living. In its 28 years of proven track record, Cityland is continuously developing projects in the ideal locations to help the hardworking Filipinos to own a home.

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Dr. Washington Sycip, Atty. Sabino Padilla, Jr. & Stephen Roxas, are Dr. Andrew Liuson, Grace Liuson, Peter Dee, Alice Gohoc, Helen Roxas, George Sycip, Simeon Valdez and Josef Gohoc.

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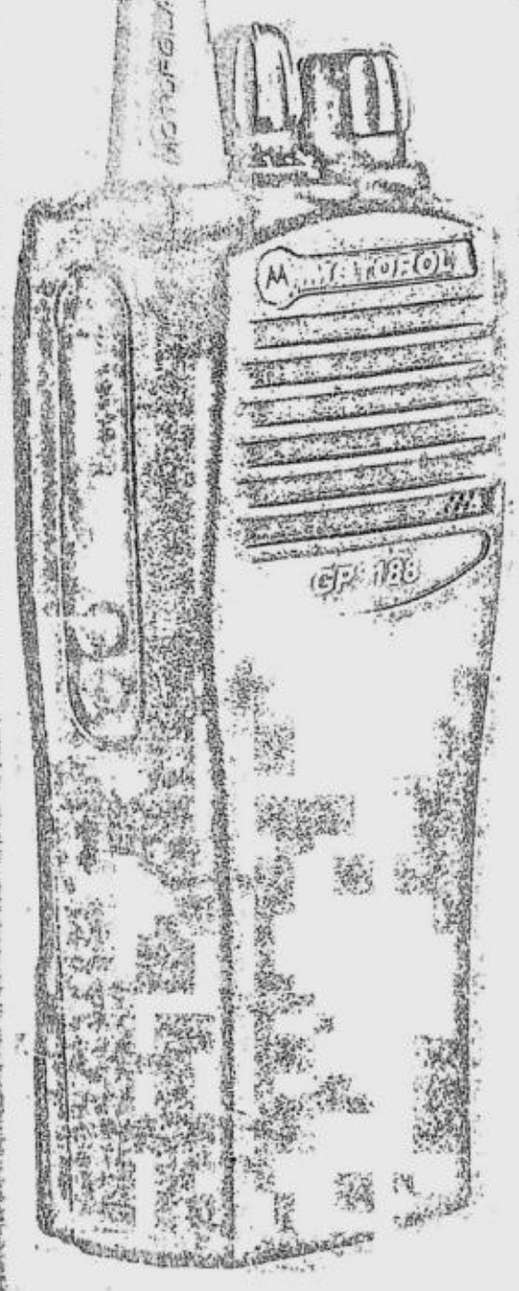

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 5, 2007)

52-WEEKS HIGH	52-WEEKS LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.1	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.5	12.25	122,700
71	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	67.5	68	66.5	67.5	4,891,200
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	70	70	68	68.5	1,269,100
935	630	China Banking Corp.	900	900	895	895	1,610
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	2,210,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	68.5	68.5	67	67	1,636,700
56.5	30.5	Philippine National Bank	52.5	53	52.5	52.5	72,000
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	62	64	62	64	10,100
39.57	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	32	32	31.5	32	1,877,100
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	82	82	80.5	80.5	187,200
66	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	63.5	63.5	63.5	63.5	2,455,800
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
3.81	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	4,000
0.85	0.6	Bankard Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	90,000
8.3	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	8	8.3	8	8.3	4,305,000
6.5	3.5	Filipino Fund Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	16,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	38	38	38	38	1,000
1,800.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,660.00	1,690.00	1,660.00	1,680.00	1,000
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	6,860,000
2.9	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.85	2.9	2.85	2.9	1,176,000
1,005.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	645	650	640	645	23,550
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,100.00	2,120.00	2,100.00	2,120.00	450
1.94	1.08	iVantage Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	1,275,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
64.5	41	First Gen Corp.	63	63.5	62.5	63.5	597,400
88	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	86	86.5	85.5	86	1,256,900
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Company Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	3,409,400
102	13.5	Manila Electric Company A	98	99	97	98.5	512,600
104	20.25	Manila Electric Company B	98	99.5	98	99	3,052,900
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.3	16,119,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	2,006,000
2.38	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.32	2.32	2.3	2.3	12,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.56	7,404,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.65	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	65,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.18	2.18	657,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	25.5	26	10,300
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	55	58	55	58	600,700
6.9	3.5	Pancake House Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	2,000
1.62	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	800,000
4.05	2.2	Roxas Holdings	2.32	2.34	2.2	2.34	512,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	66.5	67	66.5	66.5	154,900
88	68.5	San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	76.5	73	75.5	135,700
0.51	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	200,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	15.75	16	15.75	15.75	4,897,900
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.8	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.8	1,978,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	6,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.5	1,525,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	338,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.9	1.84	1.88	13,356,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	1,076,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	100,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	[illegible]	Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.65	3.65	101,000
0.095	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0875	0.09	0.0875	0.09	53,100,000
1.14	0.17	APC Group Inc.	1	1	0.99	1	23,340,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	134,200,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	50,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.2	9.2	9	9.1	4,664,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	122,000,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	320,000
2.75	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.5	2.75	2.44	2.6	23,416,000
5.8	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	4.5	4.5	3.6	3.8	173,000
10	5.8	Atok-Big Wedge Company Inc. B	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	1,000
10	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Company Inc. A	8.5	8.9	8.5	8.9	2,000
570	272.92	Ayala Corp.	555	570	555	560	327,200
12.17	6.96	Bacnotan Cons Industries Inc.	12	12	12	12	10,300
6.9	0.7	Balabac Res and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	38,000
5.2	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.95	5.1	4.95	5	21,747,000
9.8	3.26	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.4	9.6	9.4	9.6	2,298,000
1.3	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	5,000
6.7	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	2,021,000
3.56	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	227,000
14.6	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	1,277,900
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	11,000
0.47	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.39	0.47	0.39	0.44	10,430,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.68	0.59	0.68	2,630,000
19	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	18	19	17.5	18.75	2,832,400
6.5	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.7	6.5	4.7	6.4	49,982,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	10,000
0.025	0.009	Pacifica Inc. A	0.018	0.024	0.018	0.024	254,000,000
1.26	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	50,000
0.63	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	2,290,000
460	206	SM Investments Corp.	430	450	430	445	614,640
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.7	1.82	1.7	1.72	1,751,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.62	0.64	86,050,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	250,000
1.56	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	50,000
0.35	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.27	0.29	14,410,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.86	1.88	1.86	1.88	1,467,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.51	0.56	0.51	0.56	590,000
17.5	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	17.5	17	17.25	14,434,300
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.66	18,333,000
4.5	1.16	C and P Homes Inc.	4	4.05	4	4.05	1,343,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	574,000
4.6	1.42	City and Land Developers Inc.	4	4.6	4	4.6	6,000
0.87	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.66	9,190,000
0.6	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	1,840,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.81	0.81	0.79	0.8	13,910,000
0.31	0.027	Ever Gotesco Res and Hold'gs Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	21,420,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.92	0.93	0.9	0.9	8,410,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	2	2.04	1.98	2.02	46,022,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	150,000,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. B	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	148,100,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.41	3,670,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.8	0.81	0.77	0.78	8,390,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4.15	4.15	4.05	4.15	28,803,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5	689,000
0.42	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.37	0.39	0.35	0.36	33,540,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.65	0.66	0.64	0.64	12,580,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	20.5	20.5	19.75	19.75	5,780,200
5.4	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.1	5.4	5.1	5.4	3,981,000
14	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	13.75	14	13.5	13.75	9,947,000
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.7	0.79	0.7	0.77	13,670,000
0.35	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	17,270,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	921,000
		MEDIA					
34	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	33	33.5	32.5	33	112,600
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	12,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.54	1.56	3,946,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,425.00	1,440.00	1,425.00	1,440.00	420,750
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,630.00	2,630.00	2,620.00	2,625.00	91,910
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7	7.1	6.9	7	2,483,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,520,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.5	8.7	8.4	8.7	54,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	277,000
0.0525	0.0263	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.046	0.047	96,900,000
0.043	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.031	0.043	0.031	0.041	490,600,000
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.18	2.18	2.16	2.18	118,000
0.075	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	20,000,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	100,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	256,500,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Grp Int'l. Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.12	2.12	48,000

6.8	2.5	Asian Te
32	12.5	Int'l Con Inc.
2.14	0.86	Keppel P
1.74	0.8	Lorenzo
4.25	1.26	Leisure a
5	2.7	Manila Ja
0.91	0.18	Premiere tions Inc.
1.2	0.42	Waterfr
9.6	7.2	Centro E
3.7	2.65	(People
41	6.6	JTH Dav
5.2	1.84	Macroas
17.25	13	Pacific O
30	9.5	Paxys In
0.016	0.007	Abra Mi
7.6	3	Apex Mi
7.7	3	Apex Min
21.25	5.6	Atlas Co
14.25	6.7	Benguet
4	1.7	Dizon Co
2.6	0.0602	GEOGRA
0.35	0.215	Lepanto
0.42	0.225	Lepanto
0.038	0.0154	Manila M
0.041	0.017	Manila M
0.024	0.0075	Omico C
6.4	2.65	Philex Mi
30	14.75	Semirara
1.24	0.25	United Pa
1.8	0.41	Vulcan I
0.38	0.23	Basic Co
0.021	0.008	Oriental P
0.022	0.009	Oriental P
14.62	9	Petroener
0.025	0.0089	The Philo

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

Shares fa

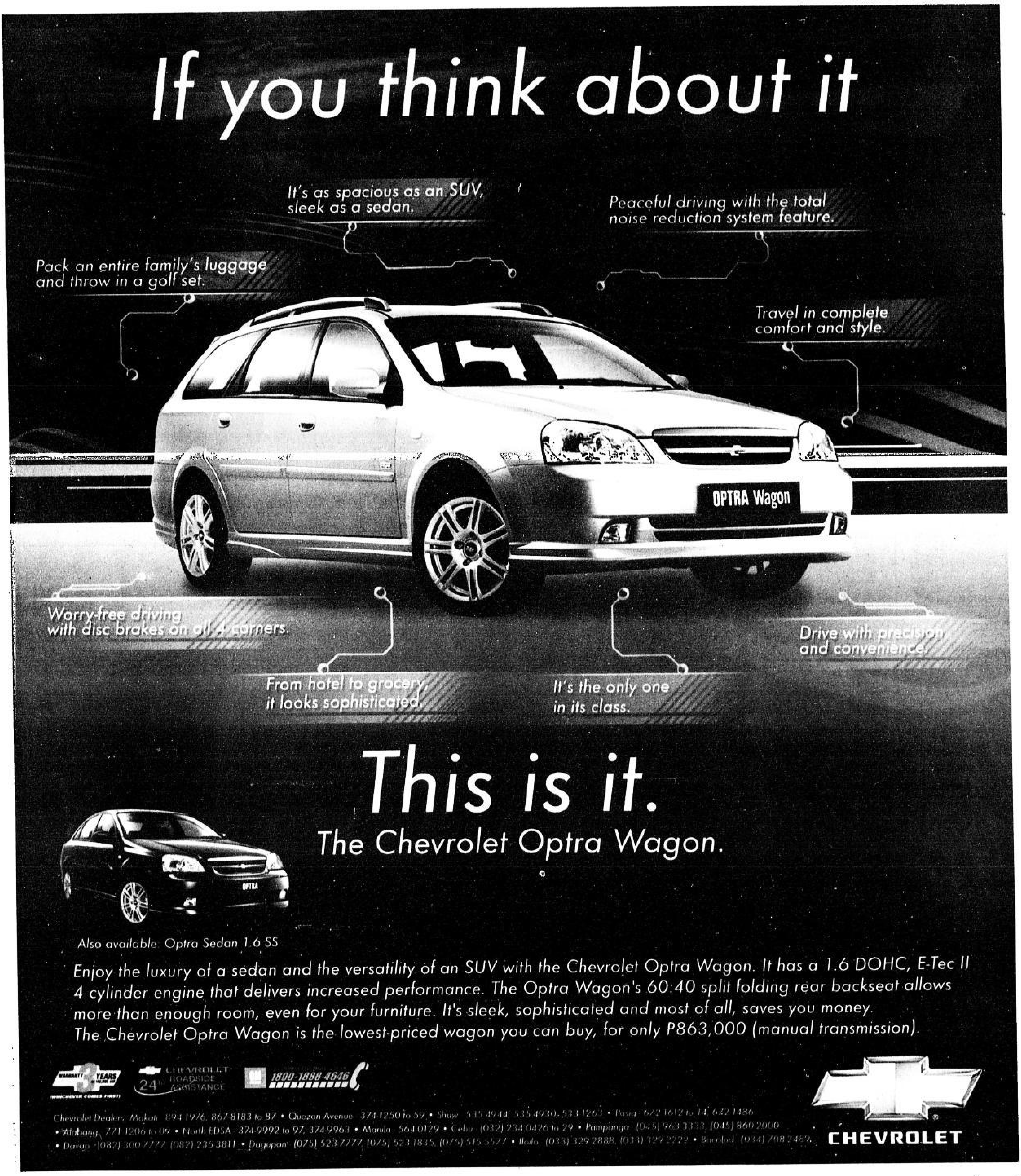
From page B3

worth P5.04 billion ($1.10

"The market is undergo rection following accumul than 6 percent in the las said Rommel Macapagal Equities. "But the correct as the market consolidated level."

He added that there wa port at the 3,600 level, "bu eye on the Chinese and US

China's share prices yes



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TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
…nals Inc	5.9	6.1	5.9	6.1	400,000
…inor Terminal Services	28.5	28.5	27.5	28	1,359,600
…ippines Marine Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	80,000
…ping Corp	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	2,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
…Resorts World Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.8	3.85	661,000
…key Club Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	65,000
…Entertainment Produc-	0.81	0.88	0.81	0.86	18,880,000
…Philippines Inc	1.12	1.12	1.08	1.08	5,348,000
EDUCATION					
…clar University	8	8	8	8	3,000
	3.3	3.3	3.25	3.3	150,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
…Holdings Inc.	25	25	25	25	1,000
…Corp.	5.1	5.1	4.95	5	1,274,000
…ile Systems Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	769,100
	26	26	25	25	255,400
MINING					
…g and Industrial Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	179,900,000
…g Company Inc. A	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.6	162,000
…g Company Inc. B	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	224,000
…Mining and Dev't Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.5	2,265,800
…orp. A	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	40,000
…er Silver Mines Inc.	3.25	3.9	3.25	3.6	785,000
…Res Philippines Inc.	2.5	2.55	2.44	2.5	42,326,000
…onsolidated Mining Co. A	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.28	12,440,000
…onsolidated Mining Co. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	4,560,000
…ing Corp. A	0.036	0.036	0.035	0.036	83,000,000
…ing Corp. B	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	315,400,000
…p.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	177,800,000
…ing Corp.	6.1	6.2	6	6.1	7,590,000
…ining Corp.	27	27	27	27	73,000
…agon Mining Corp.	1.1	1.24	1.08	1.22	17,975,000
…trial and Mining Corp	1.48	1.38	1.44	1.46	6,421,000
OIL					
…olidated Inc	0.43	0.44	0.42	0.42	7,980,000
…t. and Minerals Corp. A	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	607,100,000
…t. and Minerals Corp. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	188,800,000
…y Resources Corp.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	75,000
…rill Corp.	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	360,300,000

SOURCE: TECHINISTOCK

…10.40%

…illion).

…ing a healthy cor…ted gains of more …t three sessions," …f Westlink Global …on was tempered …around the 3,600

…s still strong sup… we are keeping an …markets."

…erday fell sharply again in volatile early trading as investors remained nervous following the previous day's decline—the biggest in over three months.

Bank of the Philippine Islands fell P1.50 to P68.50 while Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was down P5 at P2,625.

Ayala Land Inc. retreated 25 centavos to P17.25.

Top-traded Globe Telecom Inc. bucked the trend, gaining P15 to settle at P1,440.

Food and beverage group San Miguel Corp's A-shares fell 50 centavos to P66.50, and its B-shares were down P1 at P75.50. *AFP*

RP to tap $1.3B in mutual funds

Financing for priority infra projects

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES SEEKS TO TAP a substantial portion of some $1.3 billion worth of funds earmarked by local and foreign investors for infrastructure projects.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that during a recent international roadshow held by the government's economic team, investors they met in Japan had expressed keen interest in investing their recently established funds in infrastructure projects in the Philippines.

Teves said the Japanese investors were referring to two Japan-based groups that recently put up mutual funds earmarked specifically for infrastructure projects. Without disclosing the identities of the funds' owners, Teves said the first fund was worth $500 million and the other was worth $300 million.

The finance chief said there was another fund worth $500 million that was set up in the Philippines by foreign and Filipino investors, and that the government was also hoping that this could be channeled to infrastructure projects pushed by the government.

He said Japanese and other foreign investors were encouraged to consider doing business in the country by reports on improving gross domestic product growth, slow inflation and declining interest rates.

"We (the government economic team) were able to get the interest of Japanese and other foreign investors into investing in the Philippines. But of course, there are several factors that will make them translate this interest into actual investments," Teves told reporters in a press conference yesterday.

He said the Philippines was competing against other countries, like Malaysia, for investments in infrastructure projects.

Teves said investors would consider a country's political and regulatory environment, and macroeconomic fundamentals in deciding where to place their money.

The Arroyo administration has identified 10 infrastructure projects that it intended to complete over the medium term. These are the P35.5 billion Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line 6, which will extend from Baclaran to Dasmariñas in Cavite; the P19.4-billion North Luzon Expressway; the Bicol Emergency Power Restoration Project; the Palawan South Road; the Panguil Bay Bridge; the Biñan-Sucat 230KV Transmission Line Project; the Line 1 North Extension Project; the Northrail-Southrail Linkage Project; the Quirino Highway Rehabilitation Project; and the Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project.

Teves said investors they met in Japan were requiring a rate of return of between 12 and 15 percent on their investments. Teves said he believed investing in infrastructure projects pushed by the Philippine government would given them their desired yield.

The finance chief said the government was likewise encouraging private sector to put up more of this type of mutual funds.

SM completes ₱4-B notes issue

SM PRIME HOLDINGS Inc. YESTERDAY SAID it had raised P4 billion through the issuance of 5-year floating rate notes.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, SM Prime said the deal was arranged by First Metro Investment Corp., with SB Capital Investment Corp. as the co-lead arranger.

It said the proceeds would be used to fund on-going capital expenditure projects and "general corporate requirements."

The facility was over-subscribed with seven primary institutional lenders subscribing to the issue.

"The strong market response to the float illustrates the high credit quality of SMPHI, as well as the local market's confidence in SM Prime Holdings Inc.," the company said.

SM Prime earlier announced it would spend P35 billion for 35 to 40 new malls and the upgrading of existing facilities over the next five years.

For this year, SM Prime two new malls will be put up—Metro Manila's Taytay town and Muntinlupa City. It also lined up the expansion of malls in Cebu City, Pampanga and Fairview, Quezon City.

Also up for expansion is the SM Mall of Asia, which will include the "Esplanade Sunset Strip."

For next year, the company will focus on areas outside Metro Manila. *Elizabeth S. Lacson*

North Harbor project generating interest

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE MAGSAYSAY GROUP OF companies is keen on participating in the modernization and privatization of Manila North Harbor, company president and chief executive officer Doris Magsaysay-Ho said.

"Our group is very keen on this (privatization). We will do whatever it takes to help make this happen. Modernization is important for our country," Magsaysay-Ho said following a stockholder's meeting of Lorenzo Shipping Corp.

Magsaysay-Ho is also the chair of Lorenzo Shipping.

She, however, declined to confirm reported plans of her company to invest directly in Manila North Harbor.

The modernization of the port was estimated to cost between P500 million and P1 billion.

The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) earlier invited prospective bidders to submit letters of intent (LOI) and their bids for the development, management, operation and maintenance of Manila North Harbor. The package includes a container terminal, the general cargo terminal and the passenger terminal complex.

Up for bidding is a 25-year contract, renewable by another 25 years.

Interested bidders were given until May 31 to submit their letters of intent. Eligibility documents for the bidding should be completed by July 2. Eligible bidders can procure a set of bidding documents from July 18 to Oct. 5.

Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) general manager Oscar M. Sevilla earlier told the INQUIRER that port operator International Container Terminal Services (ICTS) had expressed interest in North Harbor's operations.

Officials of Harbor Center, Lorenzo Shipping Corp. and Magsaysay Shipping Lines have also met with the PPA chief to inquire about the status of privatization plans for the port, which Sevilla said might be completed "within the year."

CURRENCIES

June 5, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.741345	1.000000	45.7180
Japan	Yen	0.006088	0.008212	0.3754
United Kingdom	Pound	1.476240	1.991300	91.0383
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094983	0.128123	5.8575
Switzerland	Franc	0.605971	0.817394	37.3696
Canada	Dollar	0.700704	0.945180	43.2117
Singapore	Dollar	0.484666	0.653766	29.8889
Australia	Dollar	0.617479	0.832917	38.0793
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.966588	2.652731	121.2776
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197676	0.266645	12.1905
Brunei	Dollar	0.483087	0.651636	29.7915
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.022671	0.030581	1.3981
Uae	Dirham	0.201859	0.272287	12.4484
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.348900	61.6690
Korea	Won	0.000799	0.001078	0.0493
China	Yuan**	0.096892	0.130698	5.9753
Argentina	Peso	0.241323	0.325521	14.8822
Brazil	Real	0.386499	0.521349	23.8350
Denmark	Kroner	0.134312	0.181173	8.2829
India	Rupee	0.018442	0.024876	1.1373
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218428	0.294638	13.4703
Mexico	New Peso	0.068938	0.092991	4.2514
New Zealand	Dollar	0.553325	0.746380	34.1230
South Africa	Rand	0.104400	0.140825	6.4382
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022449	0.030282	1.3844

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—June 4, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of June 4, 2007

DMIA seen handling 2M tourists

From page B5

ly to the boom in low-cost carrier activity into and out of the former US airbase.

"DMIA has already beat Davao and Cebu," said Pamintuan, adding that 46 percent of inbound passenger traffic handled at the airport were tourists.

Because of this, he pointed out that the immediate region was experiencing significant economic growth in the tourism sector, as evidenced by an 80- to 90-percent occupancy rate in hotels in the Clark area.

Pamintuan pointed to statistics showing how each tourist arrival indirectly translates to the generation of one local job for at least one year, based on the average of $1,200 that each visitor spends. Pamintuan, who is also a close adviser of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, urged her administration to approve Executive Order 500-B, which would ease restrictions on foreign carriers' access to DMIA.

The policy is being opposed by local airlines like Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific Air and Asian Spirit, all of whom believe that unilateral liberalization would put them at a disadvantage against foreign carriers.

During his speech in yesterday's open skies forum, Pamintuan took a swipe at "the dominant local carrier"—referring to Lucio Tan-owned Philippine Airlines—which has firmly opposed liberalization policies.

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PNOC

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Telephone Nos. 893-6001 to 47 local 4201
Telefax No.: (632) 840-2044

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) has approved the privatization of PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC), a company engaged in the Oil, Gas and Coal exploration, development, and production.

The PNOC EC Privatization Committee (PRIVACOM) has been authorized by the Boards of Directors of PNOC and PNOC EC to coordinate the process of selecting the Financial Advisors/ Lead Arranger/ Underwriters/ Global Coordinator to advise, guide and assist in the design, planning, preparation and implementation of the program for the privatization of PNOC EC. For this purpose, the PNOC EC PRIVACOM is inviting interested parties to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the said services.

Interested parties for the financial advisory/underwriting/global coordinating services may submit eligibility requirement individually or in association with other parties, as may be deemed practicable. However, only one eligibility requirement should be submitted by those firms which will participate in the bidding.

Prospective financial advisors/ lead arranger/underwriter/global coordinator **must meet all of the following criteria:**

- Has experience as financial advisor/ lead arranger/underwriter in equity offering
- Has track record in working with the Philippine Government, its government-owned and controlled corporations or its government financial institutions, either as an advisor for privatization or arranger bank for financing.
- Has experience in lead-managing public equity offerings and arranging equity sales, both globally and in Asia
- Has indicated availability and commitment to deploy in the country a dedicated team with experience in oil and gas or coal projects

Eligibility Documents shall be available for issuance at the above address from the Mr. Jose Anthony T. Villanueva starting **June 6, 2007** upon presentation of **Letter of Intent** and upon payment of non-refundable fee of US DOLLARS: Five Hundred (US$500.00). Eligibility of prospective firms will be based on compliance with eligibility requirement, using pass/fail non-discretionary criteria, as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A) of RA 9184, The Government Procurement Reform Act. The last day of issuance of eligibility documents will be on **June 15, 2007** @ 4:00 P.M. while the deadline for the submission of eligibility documents will be on **June 19, 2007** @ 10:00 A.M. Late submission of eligibility documents shall not be accepted.

PNOC EC shall draw up a short list of firms from those which have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of 3 to 7 firms. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

- Applicable experience of the firm in equity offering - 40%
- Applicable experience of the firm in oil, gas and coal projects - 30%
- Qualification of members of transaction team - 30%
  (education, work experience, number of years in firm, etc.)

Only those short-listed firms will be invited to submit bids.

PNOC EC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense in the preparation of the bid. Moreover, PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

This publication is also posted in our website at **www.pnoc-ec.com.ph** and in the website of Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System at **www.philgeps.net**. Eligible bidders shall then be notified in writing by July 3. 2007.

(Sgd.) **EDGARDO M. DEL FONSO**
PNOC EC PRIVACOM Chairman

(PDI–June 6, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description	One (1) lot supply, delivery and installation of five (5) sets (2 units/set) Automatic Door Operator at the BSP Davao Regional Office, per BSP Scope of Work
Approved Budget for the Contract	P2, 700,000.00
Delivery Period	Within sixty (60) calendar days after receipt of Approved Contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar requirement awarded and completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) amounting to at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 6 June 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	22 June 2007, 9:30 a.m.
3. Opening of Bids	10 July 2007, 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,350.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI--June 6, 2007)

CAMARINES SUR III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(CASURECO III)
San Isidro, Iriga City
Fax No. (054) 299-2382

INVITATION TO BID

The Camarines Sur III Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CASURECO III) per requisite of Coop policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards invites all interested Bidders/Suppliers to apply for pre-qualification/ eligibility and to bid for the Supply of:

A). 10,000 units of KWH METER ON CONSIGNMENT BASIS and VAT inclusive.
CLs 2.0, 2W. 1 0, 240 Volts, TA: 10(30) 5(15)
Electronic, Form IA

B). ELECTRICAL MATERIALS:

1) Steel Poles	35 ft	247 pcs.
	30 ft	100 pcs
2) Conductor Bare (ACSR)	4/0	23000 mtrs.
	2/0	20000 mtrs.
	1/0	11000 mtrs.
	2	70000 mtrs.
3) Duplex Wire	#2	8000 mtrs.
	#6	15000 mtrs.
TW# 8 stranded		10,000 mtrs.
THN 60 mm copper		600 mtrs.
THN 50 mm copper		600 mtrs.
4) Distribution Transformer (Double Bushing 7.62/13.2 KV)		
10 KVA		10 units
15 KVA		20 units
25 KVA		26 units
37.5 KVA		10 units
50 KVA		5 units
4) Capacitors:		
50 KVAR		12 units
100 KVAR		3 units
150 KVAR		3 units
5) Reclosers:		
1 0 (120 amps)		3 units
3 0 (150 amps)		2 units
1 0 (Assrtd ratings)		
100 amps		6 units
70 amps		5 units
50 amps		4 units
6) Protective Devices:		
Cut Out Comb w/ LA		51 sets
Cut Out Comb w/ LA:		
10 KV, 100 amps		250 sets
15Kv, 200 amps		100 sets
7) Distribution Line Hardwares:		
Pin Insulator 55-5		1000 pcs
Suspension Insulator 6"		500 pcs
Cross Arm "8		500 pcs
Comp. Connector YHO 150		2500 pcs
Comp. Connector YHO 200		500 pcs
Comp. Connector YHO 300		500 pcs
Comp. Connector YHO 400		1000 pcs
Comp. Connector 2A8u		10000 pcs
Hot Line Clamp 1/0 to 4/0		200 pcs
Compression Tool (Sm)		2 pcs
Electrical Tape (big)		150 rolls
8) FUSE LINKS: 2 amps		500 pcs
3 amps		500 pcs
5 amps		500 pcs
6 amps		500 pcs
8 amps		200 pcs
10 amps		200 pcs
20 amps		200 pcs
30 amps		200 pcs
40 amps		200 pcs
50 amps		200 pcs
60 amps		200 pcs
80 amps		200 pcs
100 amps		100 pcs
120 amps		30 pcs
9) Miscellaneous:		
GI sheets plain gauge 18		50 sheets
Bolt w/ nut 1/2x1		2000 pcs
Bolt w/ nut 1/2 x1.5		2000 pcs
Plastic Seal		15000 pcs
Woodscrew 1 1/2 x 1		10 gross
Plastic Meter Box		2000 pcs
10) TOOLS & EQUIPMENT		
Eng'g Software		1 pck.
Quail Stick		2 pcs
Meter Test Equipt		1 pc
Telescopic Hotstick 30		10 pcs
Adjustable Ladder 30"		10 pcs
Comp. tools w/ die		19 pcs
Turn Test Ratio		1 pc
Megger Tester		1 pc
Line mans rubber gloves (15Kv)		5 pairs
Rechargeable Flashlight		10 units
Spotlight 12 volts		15 units
Hard hat		60 pcs.
Shotgun Disconnect 10		10 pcs
Colling Hoist 2.5 tonners		19 pcs
Wire grip 1-4/0		19 pcs

You may secure the Pre-Qualification Requirements from the Secretary of the Bids and Awards Committee, Finance Dept. CASURECO III, Inga City anytime during office hours before the date of bidding.

Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5 00 PM on June 18, 2007 and no documents shall be accepted thereafter. Only those who will be qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding

BIDDING will be conducted at 1:00 pm on JUNE 19, 2007. Pre-bid conference wil be on June 18, 2007 @ 1:00 pm coop function room. Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE on or before 1:00 PM of June 19, 2007. Five (5%) percent Bidders bond is required as a matter of policy. Payment of non-refundable bidding fee of P5,000.00 (Please bring sample of kwh meter).

CASURECO III reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive defect or informality therein, or accept any bid or offer which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to CASURECO III.

(Sgd.) MR. PERFECTO M. GASCON
BAC Chairman

Noted by:
ENGR. PEDRO M. PRESTADO, JR.
General Manager

(PDI–June 6 & 11, 2007)

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/ Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
1	11	UNITS	25KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
2	1	UNIT	37.5 KVA DIST. TRANSFORMER
3	11	UNITS	50KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
4	2	UNITS	75KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
5	3	UNITS	100 KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
6	1	UNIT	167 KVA DIST. TRANSFORMER

JOB ORDER FOR FARM-OUT AGENCY LOT PRICE: P 1,168,805.00

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 pm of June 7, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. A post-qualification may be conducted accordingly hereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on June 14, 2007.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of June 14, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy. Payment of non-refundable bidding fee of P5,000.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO

(Sgd.) REINERIO R. RAMOS
General Manager

(PDI--June 6 & 8, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320 Local 5288

PNOC

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

2 Units Rotary Table (Chain Drive) Under FDM 73520-1
Approved Budget: PHP 29,726,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Mr. Arvin Jose A. Gomez** starting **June 6, 2007** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on June 14, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the above address

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Wall Clock Time)** of July 4, 2007. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI–June 6, 2007)

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Assistant Director – Finance & Administration

A vacancy for the above-stated position is available. Interested candidates may wish to visit our website at www.aseansec.org for details on job specifications, qualifications and application procedures. Closing date is 28 June 2007.

OBITUARIES

Today is the 31st Birthday (A Heavenly One),
of

SIDNEY ISHMAEL HERMOSISIMA SANTOS

who was claimed by **Jesus** Dec. 24, 2006 about 8 am.

Mom May Hermosisima – Santos & Brother Arthur Emmanuel H. Santos, Jr.
request the readers, friends, IS & UPLB classmates to pray for the eternal repose of SID's soul.

Holy Masses are offered today at the following churches-chapels:

Makati Med. Ctr. Chapel 7:30 am, 12 Noon, 4 pm – where SID was born.
Parish of the Resurrection, BF Homes Parañaque 6:15 am 6:30 pm – where SID was baptized.
Sacred Heart Church, Cebu City 6 am 5 pm 6 pm – where SID's parents got married
Redemptorist Church, Cebu City – all 10 masses of the day
Adoration Church, Cebu City – 5 pm
Christ the King, Toronto, CAN – 10 am- where SID was going to live
Queen of Peace Church, Bacolod City – 5:30 pm – where SID spent his birthday last year.
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park – all 4 masses of the day – where SID was interred
Sto. Niño de Paz, Greenbelt Chapel – all 4 masses of the day – where SID heard masses w/ Mom & brother
Daughters of St. Paul 2650 F.B. Harrison, Pasay City – 6:15 am
Sanctuario del Sto. Cristo, San Juan - 6 am 7 am 7 pm
Redemptorist Church, Gogon, Legaspi City – 6 am
Mary Mother of the Church, BF Resort Las Pinas - 6:30 am 7 pm
Jesus the Divine Healer, Tahanan Vill Pque – 6 am
Assumption Church, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia – 6 pm
St. James Church, Ayala Alabang Village – 6 am – where SID heard masses with Mom

To friends: 4 pm Novena Sid's crypt and 6 pm Forbes mass today

Godspeed, darling Sid. Thank you for the gift of yourself.

LUZ DE GUZMAN MANASAN
"Lo"

peacefully joined our Creator on the 4th of June at the age of 87.

Her children, **FELICIANO & Angelita, ROSARIO & Alfonso, VIRGILIO (†), ESTELITA, FE & Ben, AURORA & Jimmy, AGNES & Randy, NOEMI & Joey**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren request friends, relatives and the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine, St. Joseph Chapel, 5th Street, Broadway Avenue, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on the 9th of June 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:30 A.M. Holy Mass at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine.

Message of Thanks

Rosemary D. Nebrao - Garcia

February 5, 1964 - May 15, 2007

We, the family and relatives, wish to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who condoled with us, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and who in countless ways helped and comforted us in our moment of grief.

"To Rosemary (Neneng), God be with you in your journey home. We will truly miss you."

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.

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IABC / PHILIPPINES

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS

Leading and linking Filipino communicators to the world

THE WHOLE WORLD IS INTERCONNECTED, largely because of the ceaseless advance of communication technologies. It is almost impossible not to be part of this global link. But the challenge is not about being connected. It is about being linked with the right people.

IABC Philippines' new president for 2007-2008, Roni Tapia-Merk

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) provides the best venues for interconnection among communicators and clients. Through its website, publications, conferences, and database, and an active network of more than 14,000 communicators in over 70 countries, IABC offers excellent linkages for Philippine-based members.

IABC Philippines equips communicators with the skills and knowledge to be an asset to this network, by providing products, services, activities and networking opportunities that help them serve their clients.

The leading PR industry association has a new leadership under Veronica L. Tapia-Merk of Merk Communication and consultant for Bank of the Philippine Islands , president; Rey Anthony David, Jr., Great Wall Advertising, executive vice president; Elpi Cuna, Jr., Meralco, VP for finance; and the board of directors are Ramon Osorio, ABS-CBN; Cosette Romero, Fleishman-Hillard Manila; Carmencita Arce, GMA Network; N. Jeric Sevilla, Jr., Manila Water; Virginia Ruivivar, Petron Corporation; Ramon Isberto, Smart Communications; Evangeline Peñamora, Sound Images Productions Inc; and Chito Macapagal, Unilever Philippines.

IABC Philippines' annual activities include recognition programs such as the CEO Excel (Communication Excellence in Organizations) Awards, which is given to chief executives who have shown outstanding communication skills, and the Philippine Gold Quill Awards, which recognizes communica-

LEADING/B11

IABC Philippines' officers for 2007-2008 are Veronica L. Tapia-Merk of Merk Communication and consultant for Bank of the Philippine Islands (second from right), president; Rey Anthony David, Jr., Great Wall Advertising, executive vice president (leftmost); Elpi Cuna, Jr., Meralco, VP for finance (fourth from right); and the board of directors are (left to right) Chito Macapagal, Unilever Philippines; Ramon Osorio, ABS-CBN; Evangeline Peñamora, Sound Images Productions Inc; Cosette Romero, Fleishman-Hillard Manila; Ramon Isberto, Smart Communications; Virginia Ruivivar, Petron Corporation (inset left); Carmencita Arce, GMA Network (inset right); and N. Jeric Sevilla, Jr., Manila Water (not in photo).

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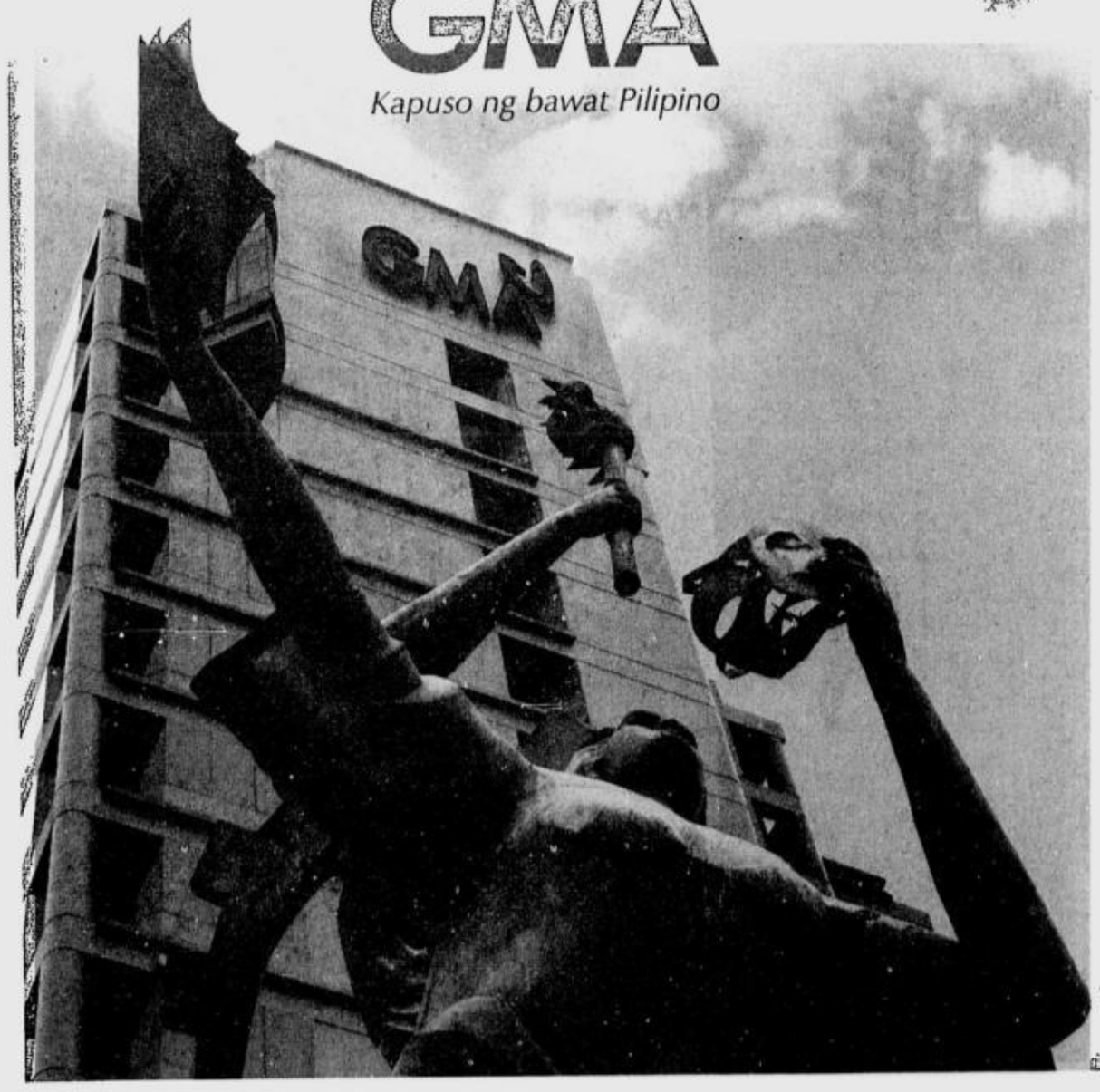
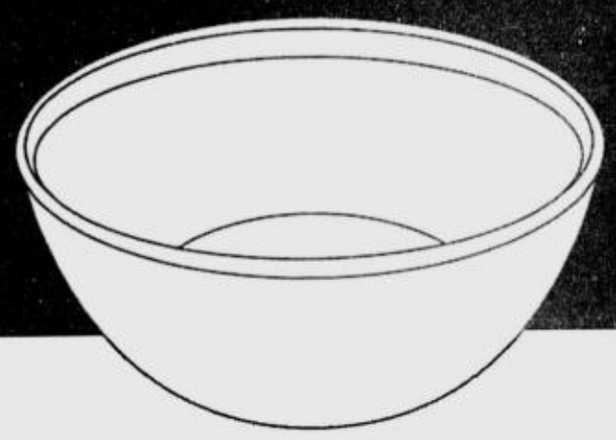


Who Cares
if our children go to sleep hungry?



We Do.

Unilever

Unilever's ***Pasiglahin ang Batang Pinoy*** does more than just give food to undernourished children. As a wholistic and sustainable feeding program, it also looks after their developmental needs such as education and values formation as well as empowers their mothers with menu planning and budgeting skills. Since 2002, Unilever Philippines, Kabisig ng Kalahi, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and various local government units have been working together to help address the undernourishment of children in communities where Unilever operates.

Pasiglahin ang Batang Pinoy supports the UN Millennium Development Goals which aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and reduce child mortality among others by year 2015.

This is Unilever's way of adding vitality to life.

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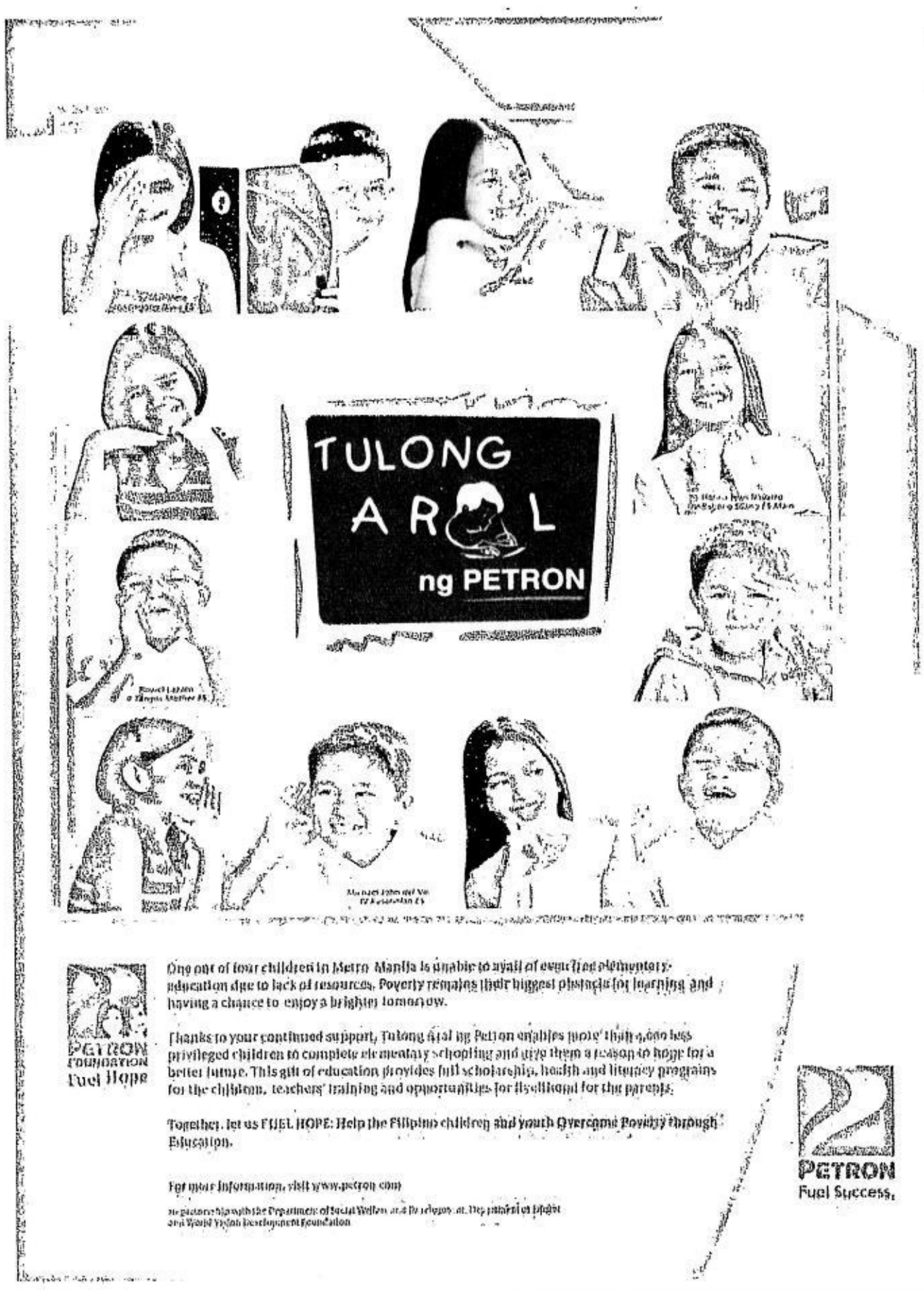


Communications has become integral to the success of individuals and organizations in this modern age. Thus, IABC Philippines is proud of its roster of publications which aim to advance the learning and career of today's communicators.

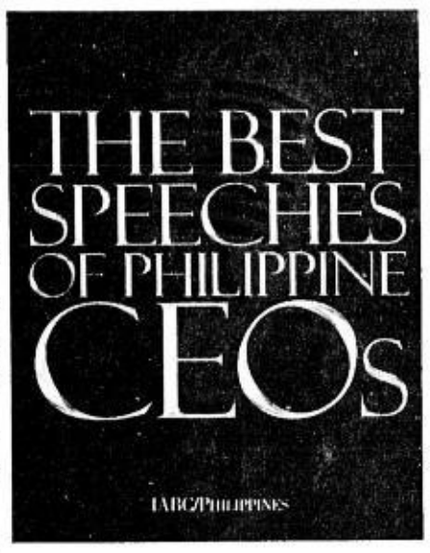
Casebooks I and II

IABC Philippines has come out with two editions of what may be the first local casebook on Public Relations, entitled The Best PR Programs and Tools. Edited by IABC board member and ABS-CBN's corporate communication head Bong Osorio, the books showcase winning entries to the IABC Gold Quill Philippines Awards. It is a perfect reference for communication students and professionals because it contains not only cases from top companies but guide questions as well.

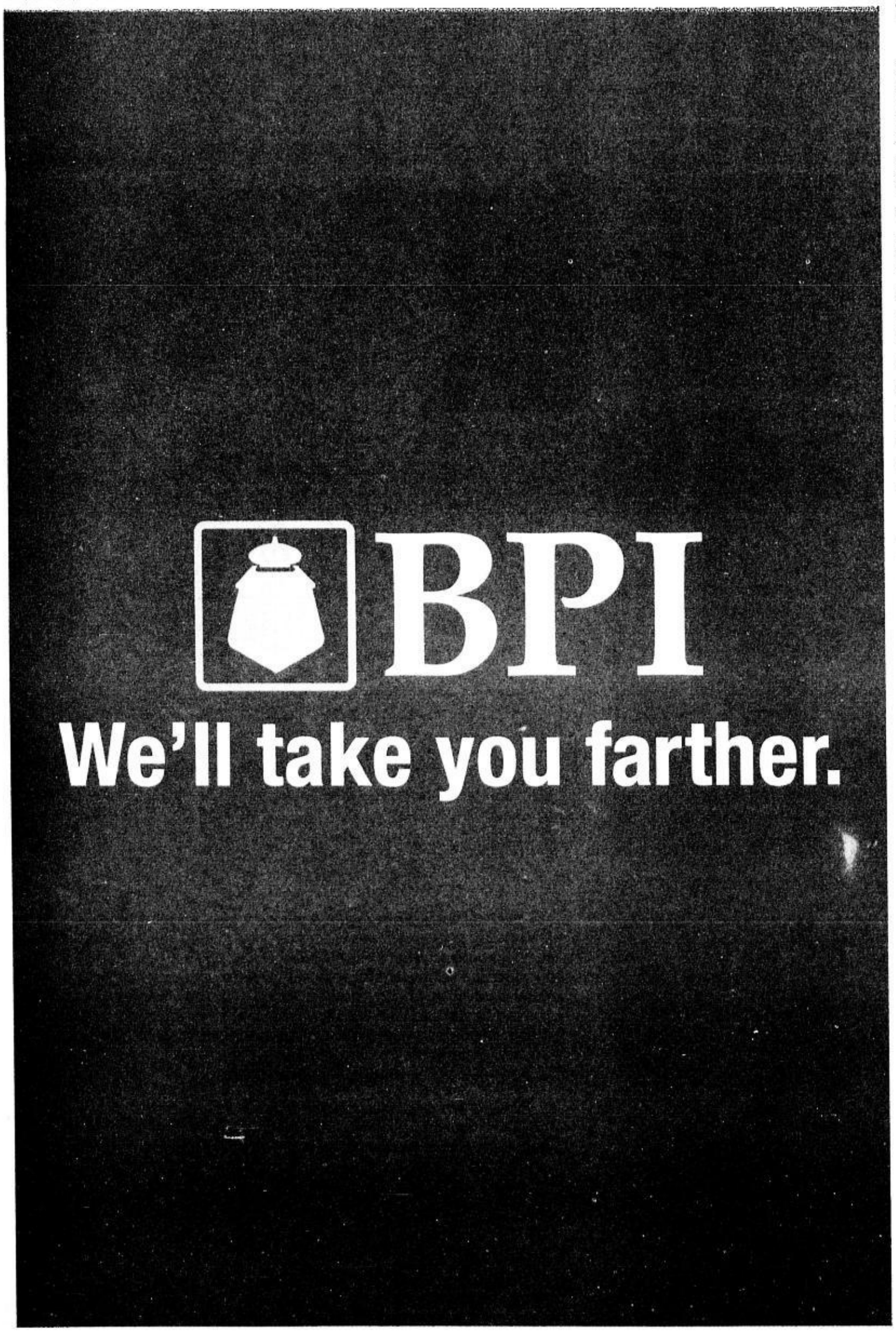
The cases invariably demonstrate that effective communications strategies, and their implementation through various tools, enable managers to accomplish business objectives either in a shorter time, and at less expense or effort. The Best PR Programs and Tools was published by the UST Publishing House. For more inquiries, call 750-5667 or visit www.iabc.com.ph.

The Best CEO Speeches

The association is also embarking on another book entitled Winning Hearts and Minds: The Best CEO Speeches in the Philippines. The book will contain samples of persuasive and intelligent speeches delivered by the CEOs, given in the context of the Philippine or Asian business environment. The speeches will reflect the core values that the company stands for, and help other executives and professional communicators in producing well-crafted speeches that inspire, motivate, and mobilize employees and other stakeholders, and achieve specific corporate objectives.



Companies interested in having their CEO's speeches included may contact the IABC office at 750-5667 or e-mail info@iabc.com.ph for inquiries.



About IABC Philippines

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS Communicators is the leading international resource of effective communication practice. We provide products, services, activities and networking opportunities to help our members achieve excellence in their work.

IABC links communicators in a global network that inspires, establishes and supports the highest professional standards of quality and innovation in organizational communication. We are recognized as a professional association of choice for communicators who aspire to excel in their chosen fields.

IABC Philippines invites you to join the journey to a new age of shared meanings and authentic connections.

Let's talk business, industry and the professions.

Catch the courage of entrepreneurs, feel the development of workers.

Enter the threshold of a new tomorrow. Its first day begins today.

Hand in hand, we will learn how to get our messages across. Move people to action. Clarify ideas. Gain adherents. Shatter myths. Discover friends.

Together, we will find novel ways of looking at things - Arrive at unexpected solutions.

Realize that in the explosion of new possibilities at the dawn of the Age of Digital Information, there is so much more we can do in Communication, than we have ever dared to imagine. IABC will be your partner in the boundless horizons of this astonishing new world.

Leading and linking Filipino communicators to the world

From page B9

tors who demonstrate expert application of thought leadership, technical skills and sustainable solutions in their programs; opportunities for learning and networking, like the Asia Pacific Communication Conference (Aspac) and the Communication Camp (Comcamp); and various seminars on the latest trends and current issues in the industry. This year, the topics for the workshops include PR Measurement, Crisis Communication, Working with Media, and High-Impact Audio-Visual Presentations.

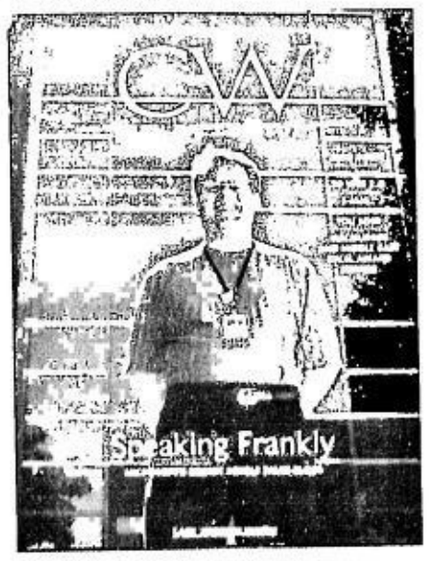
"We are encouraging all communication practitioners to be part of IABC," Roni Merk said. "Members are given many opportunities that will help them achieve their fullest potential in their discipline - including access to a network of professional communicators all over the world and regular updates on international best practices and latest trends."

IABC members learn current best practices, and insights from today's brightest thought leaders in Communication World, IABC's award-winning member magazine and CW Bulletin e-newsletter.

Members also gain entry to the IABC International Conference, the leading international forum of its kind. Business communication professionals gather annually to learn the latest developments in communication and make connections that will advance their communication programs and careers.

IABC Philippines leads and links Filipino communicators to the world.

IABC Philippines equips communicators with the skills and knowledge to be an asset to this network, by providing products, services, activities and networking opportunities that help them serve their clients



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BUSINESS

Moves to improve invest climate up

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS COUNcil has teamed up with the World Bank's private-sector arm to find ways to improve the business environment in the country and entice more investments.

In a joint statement, the public-private NCC and the International Finance Corp. said their priorities include streamlining transaction flows and reducing the cost of doing business.

Cesar Bautista, NCC cochair representing the private sector, said the partners wanted to see more consistency in the application and interpretation of business rules at the national and local levels.

"For this to happen, we need to have better information on how business regulations are implemented at both levels," said Bautista, who is a former Trade Secretary.

"The country's competitiveness would be advanced by hard objective data on how it performs against specific measures and standards and in comparison with other countries, and this partnership with IFC is a step in the right direction," he added.

Also, IFC announced it was embarking on a project which, with the help of the Asian Institute of Management, would measure the cost of doing business in 17 key cities in the country.

The project is aimed at developing consistency in the thinking, implementation and monitoring of business regulation through the creation of a common framework.

Jesse Ang, IFC acting country manager for the Philippines, said the project would provide a rich source of information on city competitiveness and create a repository of current data and benchmarks on business regulation.

The IFC-AIM collaboration would take advantage of insights from IFC's "Doing Business Philippines" study, which looks at regulations as well as the AIM's "Philippine Cities Competitiveness Ranking Project," which tracks a set of competitiveness drivers using government data and business perception surveys at local levels.

Doing Business Philippines is an extension of the joint IFC and WB Doing Business report that benchmarks the cost of doing business in 175 economies.

The report is a benchmarking tool that is "objective, systematic and internationally comparable (and is expected to) help improve transparency and increase information flows by providing a mechanism to monitor the health of the business environment and serve as a catalyst for reform."

Lower power rates expected

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH THE ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON, the Energy Regulatory Commission expects the National Power Corp. to cut power rates by 35 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) starting next month.

This is due to the difference between the state firm's dry and wet season time-of-use (TOU) rates as provided by the ERC.

"This lower rate has already been approved by the ERC based on its decision dated April 13, 2005 regarding the (TOU) rate scheme," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said.

The TOU scheme provides Napocor customers with flexible hourly rates, which are lowest during off-peak hours, or between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., and highest during peak hours, or from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sundays and holidays are also considered off-peak times.

Rates are also lower during the wet season, or from July to December, as electricity demand usually falls during this time due to the colder weather.

Hydroelectric plants are also able to produce more power during these months. These facilities are considered among the cheapest sources of electricity.

According to Napocor data, its average TOU rate for the Luzon grid during the January-June period is at P4.0753 a kWh.

In the July-December period, this goes down to P3.7241 a kWh, translating to a sensonal difference of 35.12 centavos a kWh.

In Mindanao, the dry season average TOU rate is pegged at P2.4480 a kWh, while the wet senson average is placed at P1.9690 a kWh.

This translates to a sensonal difference of 47.90 centavos a kWh.

The average TOU rate in the Visayas is the same throughout the year—P2.8879 a kWh—as the grid does not get electricity from hydropower sources.

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3 months	3.63%	3.75%	3.75%	3.88%
6 months	3.75%	3.88%	3.88%	4.00%
12 months	3.88%	4.00%	4.13%	4.25%

*Quoted rates are subject to change without prior notice. Rates are on per annum basis and subject to 7.5% withholding tax

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Color cartridge PRICE	P 449	P 702
Color cartridge YIELD[2]	400 pages	185 pages
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2bU! survey: What are you most excited about this school year?

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WHILE SOME STUDENTS (okay, most) feel that summer break has just started and more time is needed for beach trips, late nights and lots of shuteye, there are those who are actually counting the minutes to the First Day of School!

Check out why these students are excited about going back to campus.

TWEET Lagera

As a freshie in De La Salle University, I'm looking forward to new experiences, the challenges that come with them as well, meeting new friends, and learning useful and productive things. **—Tweet Lagera, 16**

School is a whole new world! **—Stephanie S., 16**

New friends, new teachers nd being a grade older! Seeing if I can take on the new surprises and challenges I'll be encountering this school year.**—Mika, Bloomfield Academy**

Seeing the teachers and meeting new students, plus making *kwento* again. **—Krizia Jimenez, 17**

STEPHANIE S.

Buying school stuff and personalizing them, which I'm doing right now. I love covering my notebooks with plastic and sticking name labels on all my stuff.**—Tania, 15**

PE!**—Elijah Salvador**

I don't have to wear the school uniform now that I'm a senior. I'm looking forward to that, so I'm making sure that I am ready with a lot of clothes.**—Jo-Ann Papa, 22**

Friday night-outs!**—Jesu Salvador**

I'm most excited about graduating and getting out of my school.**—Abby Manalastas, 16**

Practicum! I want to taste a little bit of the real world.**—Yoanna S., 19**

I also look forward to suspended classes because of changes in weather.**—Sean Melendres, 15**

Thinking about the new people I'd meet and all the great things I'd learn from them.**—Cheers Vazquez, 22, Center for International Education (will be sent to Northwood University in Michigan)**

Cute classmates, cute schoolmates and cute professors!**—Reden, 15,** AMA

I am pretty excited about making new memories.**— Martin Lawrence, 18,** UP Diliman

Another school year means another chance for me to impress myself with academic and extra-curricular accomplishments that I'm not entirely sure I am capable of accomplishing at the start.**—Marilen Mondejar**

The coming school year is my last year in school, so I can't wait to finally be a senior and act all bossy.**—Emile A., 21**

Being with my friends again, and trying out new places to eat in every lunch break.**—Bryan, 19, Ateneo**

ANIKA

Cute boys I didn't see last school year.**—Norman,** Southridge

After a bunch of basic subjects last year, I'm looking forward to subjects that are now related to my course.**—Nelson, 17**

It's time to flaunt my new clothes, new shoes and new bags. Hahahahaha.**—Anika, 18,** Philippine Normal University

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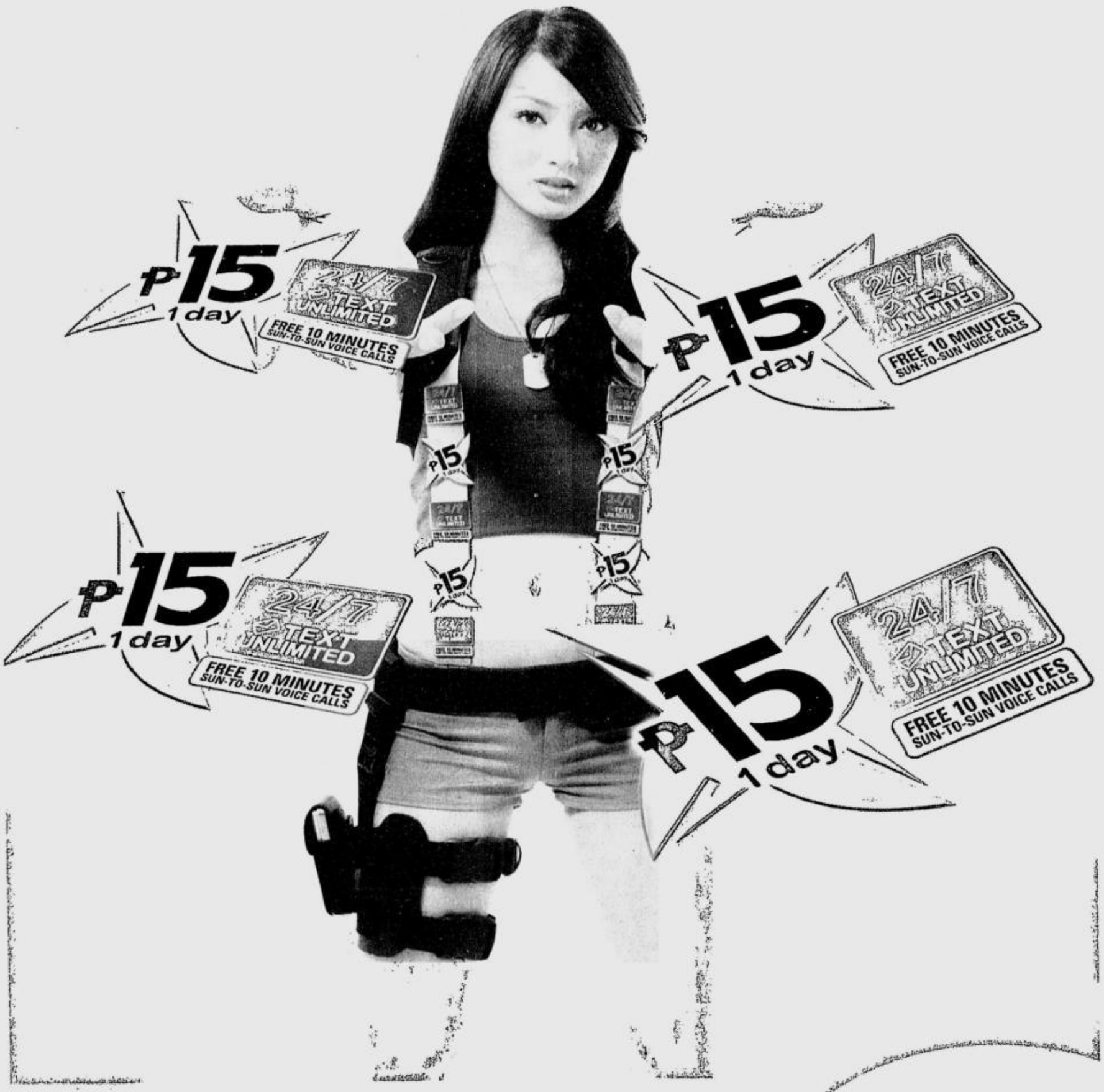

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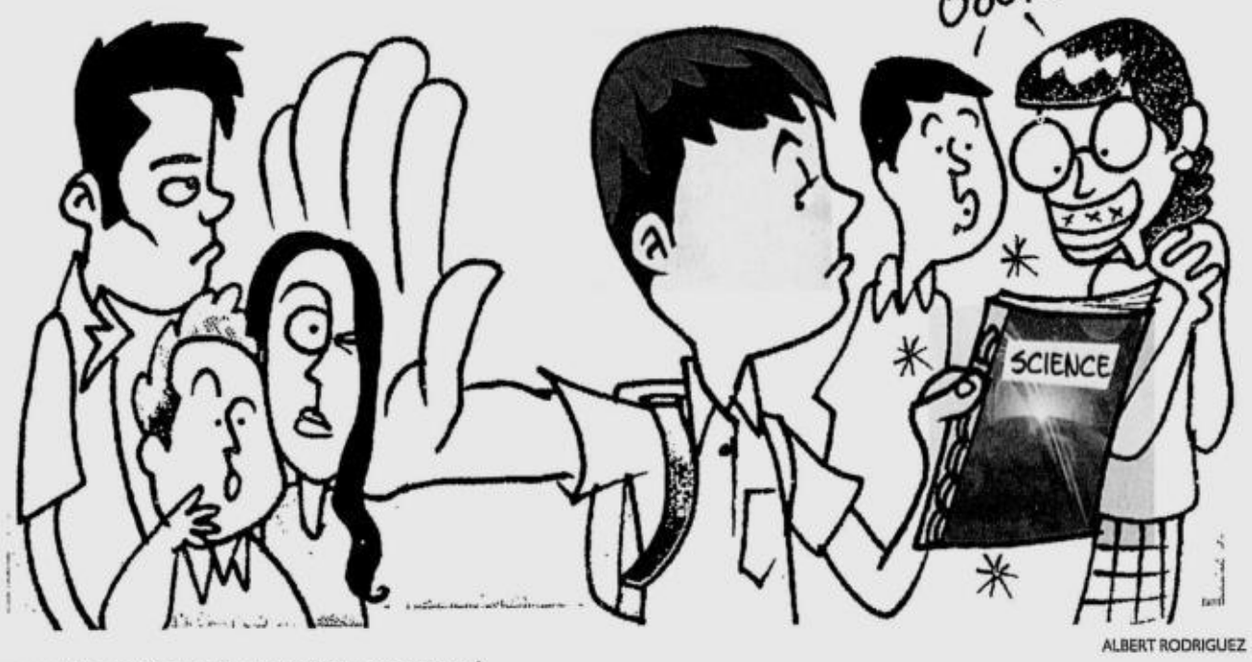
Things I didn't do in school—but should have

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent



ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

I SPENT TOO MUCH TIME obsessing over my notebooks.

When I was in third year high school, I had an obsession with perfect notebooks. So I bought expensive Cattleya notebooks because they had the best quality paper, took out the spring, wrapped the individual covers in plastic and with a tear-out page from a magazine, and sewed the whole notebook back using string.

Inside, I'd use a red Pilot sign pen to draw a margin, a blue one for the date and titles, and a black one for regular text. I also made it a point to write just on the right side pages for uniformity.

At the end of every week, some classmates would borrow my notebooks and bring them home to copy from them. At the end of the year, most teachers would commend me for my perfect notebook.

It surely felt good, but now that I look back, I realize that coming up with perfect notebooks wasn't much of an accomplishment. It's not as if one could end up a valedictorian because of them. What are perfect notebooks if you don't really read them, right?

I limited my social circle.

I was a goody-goody from kindergarten to the first two years of high school. I would only hang out with the Top 5 students of the class, those with at least two Best in Conduct Awards, the science geeks and the devout Catholics who had Best in Religion Awards.

When I became a junior, I discovered a whole new world brimming with fellow angsty teens, homosexuals, suicidal loners, single parents, Goths and posers. And they were all fun and interesting! While I was happy that I had finally met kindred souls and other amazing characters who later on become the subjects of my stories, poems and songs, I also felt bad that I had limited my social circle early on, thus depriving myself of many more inspiring and fascinating people.

I was too shy to become friends with my teachers.

In high school, I drew a huge line between me and the teachers. For me, they were paragons of perfection and inspiration who had the responsibility to educate us and nothing more. I looked at them just as teachers—robots, adults, even enemies sometimes.

It was only during high school graduation that I experienced a "Before Sunrise" moment with a teacher. I was so surprised and delighted to discover how a cool person she was. We became instant friends.

> I now realize that coming up with perfect notebooks wasn't much of an accomplishment. It's not as if one could end up a valedictorian because of them

In college, I made sure that I still drew a line between me and my teachers, but I also opened myself to the possibility of friendships with them. Now, I am still best friends with someone who used to be my teacher—someone who drank cheap cafeteria coffee with me, was in love with "Ally McBeal" just like me, and played tag with me in the campus track and field under the heat of the sun—in high heels at that!

I didn't join clubs and contests.

Actually, I did. But I wish now that I had joined more. School would have been extremely boring if I just studied for the various subjects and then went home for dinner. While I got so much fulfillment from club activities and contests (even when I lost), I should have squeezed in more time for them. Extra-curricular activities are fun and educational; they provide a taste of the real world. Oh, they look good on your resume, too.

I didn't raise my hand more often in class.

I knew the answers most of the time, but I didn't bother to raise my hand because I was afraid I didn't have the correct answer or that my classmates would think I was such a know-it-all. I realize now, of course, that one should not be paralyzed by fear of not having the correct answer, especially in grade school! I also think you shouldn't care too much about what others might think. Who cares if they think you're such a know-it-all, especially when you do know the answers?

I didn't study hard.

Now that I'm pretty much done with school, I realize how I could have gotten higher grades, aced some exams and even graduated with honors if only I had exerted a bit more effort. I wish I studied harder and had paid more attention to my professors. But that's hindsight for you.

Now you know what to do in school, folks!

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

Handwriting CSI

One's personality and disposition are manifested in the manner he or she puts pen to paper

By Danicar Mariano
2bU! Correspondent

MUCH OF OUR life and our successes depend on getting along with others. Studies have shown that couples in a happy relationship, for example, prove to be healthier and more motivated. A lot of self-help books serving as how-to-succeed manuals also emphasize smooth navigation of the rivers of social relations. Harmony with the crowd involves understanding people's behavior and personalities. This is especially true for people who are going to be with us all the time. For students, this coming school year, rain or shine, these people are their classmates and teachers.

If one is observant, we get to know people's characteristics from their mannerisms, movements and facial expressions. Portraying our deepest selves, our unconscious mechanisms also reveal themselves in slips of the tongue, body language and even in our style of dressing.

There's no wonder then, that it also manifests in the way we write. Indeed, as with many things we are not overtly conscious of, our personality and disposition can show in how we push the pen.

In the school setting, a dead giveaway of personality is the vastly unexplored art and science of graphology. The term graphology was coined in 1871, proving that the practice and its principles have existed long ago.

Graphology is a psychological tool used to understand a person's disposition, mood and to some extent, personality. Graphology has been utilized in psychology, in legal cases, and job applications to ascertain the nature of the applicant. It can also be used for self-awareness and as a springboard for reflection and contemplation.

One can do it by first getting a sense of the whole writing and then narrowing down to specific letters or vice versa. It is important to note, however, to always contextualize the piece of writing, noting the patterns that are consistent with the whole.

These suggested methods will set you on your quest to learning handwriting analysis, as based on "Instant Insight," a book by Cash Peters. The following are important details to watch out for.

Size

Take note of the size of the writing in contrast to the paper and or the board. If the writing is small and close to one another, what would you instinctively read from the person? You would probably come to the conclusion that this person is modest and doesn't want to draw too much attention on himself or herself. Or that this person may be feeling a little cramped.

Large writing suggests the opposite—a certain flamboyance and flair, and of being comfortable in the limelight. The popular Walt Disney signature, for example, shows a round, bouncy, looped writing that suggests exuberance and effervescence.

Pressure

Heavy handed writing or writing which makes a mark on the other side of the sheet is a clear indication of stress. This person is putting a lot of determination and effort into what he is doing, perhaps too much effort. If the handwriting is also tight and cluttered, this may also indicate repression and a feeling of being overwhelmed or a need to regain control.

Writing, which is light, on the other hand, shows that the piece has been written casually. Writing which is too light—barely putting ink on the page—for instance, is the sign of too much modesty, or perhaps—when sprawled out as well—laziness.

Margins

A big left-hand margin means this person is most likely a planner. He or she calculates his/her moves before executing it. This person is also cautious, and will think through decisions for a long time. A big right-hand margin, on the other hand, is an indication that the person is reliable—one who will always be on time, and meet the deadlines. If this right-hand margin is nonexistent, the writer is probably happy-go-lucky about deadlines and chores.

Margins on every side of a piece of writing means a very orderly person, signaling a life ruled by routine. His is a very structured and rigid world. This person is probably also very upright, and not very natural or spontaneous. If there are no margins at all, this is probably written by a very intense person who has a lot to say and who might have difficulty bringing his emotions under control.

Slants

It may also occur to us instinctively how a droopy piece of writing which slants down reflects a person with a downcast, pessimistic attitude to life. Take note that graphology results may also be circumstantial and not the ultimate rule, the person who wrote it may be feeling exhausted at the moment or recently recovering from a blow. Be cautious in asking.

ANTHONY MISTADES

Writing which slants up, on the other hand, is an indication of optimism. This is a person who rises up to the occasion and believes everything will turn out well. This may also be an indication of strong faith. The greater the slope upward, the more pronounced the trait will be.

Writing which slants to the right is a sign that the writer is an expressive, dynamic, action-oriented individual. It also indicates drive and determination. Writing which slants to the left, in the Roman alphabet system of writing however, is an indication that the writer is holding back, hesitant to show emotions.

Now we shall proceed to what the individual letters mean.

For the purposes of this article, we shall only deal with the interpretations of the small letters of the alphabet which provide useful insight to the writer's psyche. Capital letters are a different matter. Please also note that inconsistencies in the manner of writing only shows that the writer has many facets to his or her personality, and the whole piece of writing, as well as the whole person, should be taken in consideration.

A's and O's—sensitivity and generosity

Watch out, for example for the tightness or openness of the writing, as in the case of the A's and the O's. An "open" or round A is a sign of sensitivity, and yet of openness to criticism. Small A's are a sign that this person may be a tad too sensitive to criticism and can't easily overlook comments or insults. Tightly written A's, moreover indicate a person who has been through a lot, and as such, guards and shields his or her sensitive side.

An open O, on the other hand, is a sign of generosity and willingness to show vulnerability. A circular, regular-size O reveals a person who is caring, accessible and generous. Loops in the O, however, spell reservations in giving, while small or tight O's reveal shrewdness or calculation. The writer likes to hang on to his or her possessions, and calculates before giving. It also shows a questioning and prudent person.

C—openness to new ideas

An open C shows an open-minded person, accepting of other people's beliefs. A not-so-open C represents a person who is more discerning. A C that is curled inwards reveals a cynical and doubting person. This person knows what s/he knows and won't let him/herself be easily fooled or scammed. If the C is blocked by next letter, the writer might be missing the bigger picture.

D—anger

The stems in the small letter d show if the person is harboring resentment while the bowl below reveals how effectively or resilient the person is dealing with this anger. If the stem of the D makes a loop, this shows that the person may have a temper. The bigger the loop, the greater the anger. The round bowl below, on the other hand, shows how the person deals with that anger. The bigger the bowl, the more tolerant and even tempered the person will be.

E—sense of humor

Small letter—sense of humor, a smiling e, so to speak, with an open loop.

Loop too big—really longs to be liked and accepted. Will go out of his way.

Tail extended down—always ready to make light of a challenging situation through humor.

Clenched—part of personality is for show—underlying character reveals a tense and serious person.

K—charm

A K with small arms that barely depart from the stem shows that the writer tends to suppress emotion. A balanced K with long lower and upper arms reveals, on the other hand, that the writer loves to give and receive affection.

An extended lower arm, on the other hand, means that this person is a real charmer, and knows how to use this appeal to get what s/he wants. When the slant for the K is especially extended, it shows that the person is really a smooth talker. Disconnected arms, separated from the stem, reveal that the writer could be insincere and schmoozy, promising you to see you again, for example, but never following through.

I—living in the now

Look at the dots above the I. Is it located right on top of the I? Is it too close or is the dot found on the right? A dot above the stem means that this person knows how to live in the present. If however, the dot is too close to the I, it may mean that the person is too focused on details, or lacking insight into the larger picture. A dot to the left also means that this person is oriented to the past, and is greatly affected by it.

The more to the left the dot is, the truer this is. A dot to the right, on the other hand, means that the writer is future-oriented, concerned on what this brings.

J—ability to receive compliments

Small letters J's written straight down show that the writer enjoys compliments and actively seeks approval. A J which curls inwards shows that its writer is able to distinguish sincerity and BS. This is a person that is not easily flattered, so praise must be heartfelt and specific. Looped J's mean that its writer has no time for cheap flattery so don't waste your breath.

L—drive

Letter I shows us the writer's ambition and drive. To do this, check out the height of the I. A tall I reveals a person with a sense of purpose and determination, while a short, stubby I means his or her goals are less clear. This person is still discerning what he or she wants out of life.

M—partnerships

This is the letter that shows the dynamics of the writer and his or her significant other.

The first hoop (the one on the left) represents the writer, while the second hoop (the one on the right represents his or her partner or desired partner. Balance-size hoops represent an equal relationship based on mutual respect and cooperation.

If the left hoop is bigger, importance is given to the self more than the partner. If the right hoop is bigger, this person likes to put his/her partner on a pedestal, giving him/ her a lot more importance and allowing the significant other to call the shots.

A large distance between the hoops shows that the person wants to be independent from his or her partner, each of them with their own separate interests and lives. If there are three hoops, the writer may be a player, or sharing his life with two partners at a time. He/she finds it difficult to commit. If there is little or no hoop, it shows that the writer hasn't found a partner yet or the partner has recently exited the picture for whatever reason.

T—love and emotions

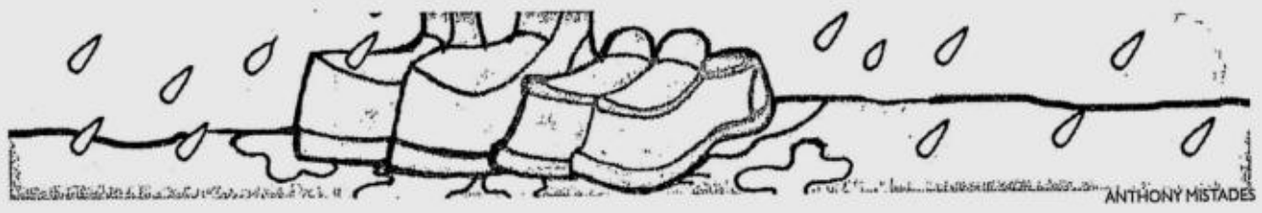
This is a revealing letter which reflects how emotional the writer is, and how in touch he/she is with these emotions. A long horizontal crossbar means that the person is expressive, and likes to communicate what he/she is feeling. A really long crossbar which cuts across the stem may also indicate that the person has a firm need to be right. The writer will also most likely be very straightforward. A short crossbar, on the other hand, means that the writer is inhibited and keeps his or her emotions locked up.

A crossbar that crosses the middle of the T means that the person is in touched with his/her heart. If it is too high up the stem then this person is a thinker more than a feeler and is probably very logical when it comes to emotions. If the crossbar crosses too low, however, it may mean that the writer is caught up with sex, and may sometimes confuse it with love. A crossbar that is detached from the stem altogether, means that this person is big on fantasy and concepts and perhaps detached from reality.

Graphology has a rich history and a myriad of applications. Due to space constraints, there are many more letters and aspects to it that this article hasn't covered. If you wish to explore handwriting analysis further, you can look at books on the topic (mis)placed in the occult section of various bookstores. There's also plenty of resources on the Internet for this misunderstood craft that is thankfully now gaining acceptance and credibility. Happy investigating!

Shoe tips for rainy days

Here's how to help your poor footwear survive the wet season


ANTHONY MISTADES

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

'TIS THE SEASON OF TRUDGING THROUGH floods yet again! Aside from looking like a drowned rat, you inevitably run the risk of ruining your new school shoes, not to mention developing foot odor if you're not careful.

If you want your footwear to make it through the rainy season, check out these tips.

• Always bring an extra pair of shoes (and socks, if needed). Certain types of black shoes tend to leave nasty blue-black stains on your feet or socks when they get soaked. That's why it's crucial for you to change shoes right away once you step out in the rain. If you're anticipating a major downpour, bring a pair of sturdy rubber boots or flipflops.

• If you don't want to bring something bulky or if your shoes are made of rain-unfriendly material like suede, buy a pair of foldable plastic zip-up boots that you can slip on over what you're wearing. Check out the department stores in malls and see if they carry these. Also, bring a waterproof bag or even a sturdy plastic bag you can use to put in your soggy shoes in case you get caught in a flood on the way to school.

• Don't make a habit of storing damp footwear inside the closet, or else the trapped moisture will cause the glue or rugby to become soft. Moisture can also cause rubber soles to crack, especially if your shoes haven't been used in a long time.

Here's a handy tip we got from Queer Eye's fab fashion savant Carson Kressley: Stuff the insides with balled-up newspaper and leave it overnight so that it can absorb all the moisture. Unlike tissue paper, it won't leave sticky white shreds all over the interior, and it's more environment-friendly to boot.

• Having a problem with smelly footwear? Put a container of baking soda or some charcoal in your shoe closet to keep moisture and bacteria from accumulating.

• Never leave your shoes out to dry under direct sunlight, especially if they're made of leather. They can become cracked and dry as sandpaper, which can cause your feet to chafe. Mop up the water as best as you can and air out the shoes at room temperature.

• If there are yellowish mud stains on your white canvas sneakers that can't be removed even after intense scrubbing, here's a trick: either brush it with vinegar, or thinly rub some toothpaste on it (the white, opaque kind is better) and let it dry. Most of the time, you won't even notice the difference.

• If your shoes are not skidproof and you're afraid of slipping on a wet floor, a temporary solution is to dab the soles with any kind of softdrink. The downside to this is that it can get irritatingly sticky when you're walking on smooth surfaces, so do this only during emergencies.

Do you have a handy-daddy?

IS YOUR DAD A DO-IT-YOURSELF kind of guy? Does leisure time mean tool time to him? Is he a sucker for home-improvement projects? Is he in his element when he has something to fix around the house?

When you go out shopping, does he head straight to the hardware store?

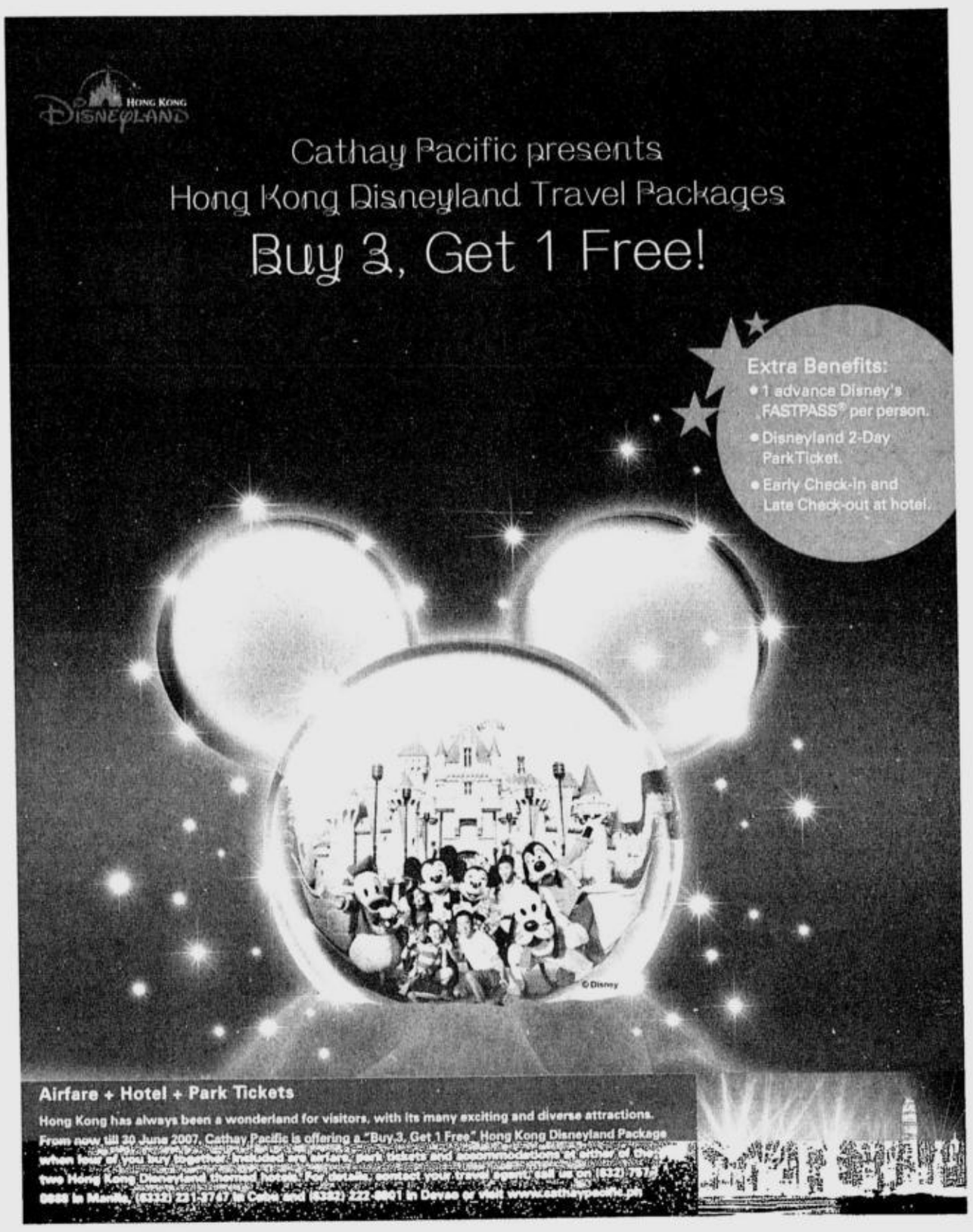
In 500 words or less, tell us about your handy-daddy and his latest or best DIY project. Send us a photo of him with his very own creation—a chair, a bookcase, a trellis, any furniture or home accessory that he made himself.

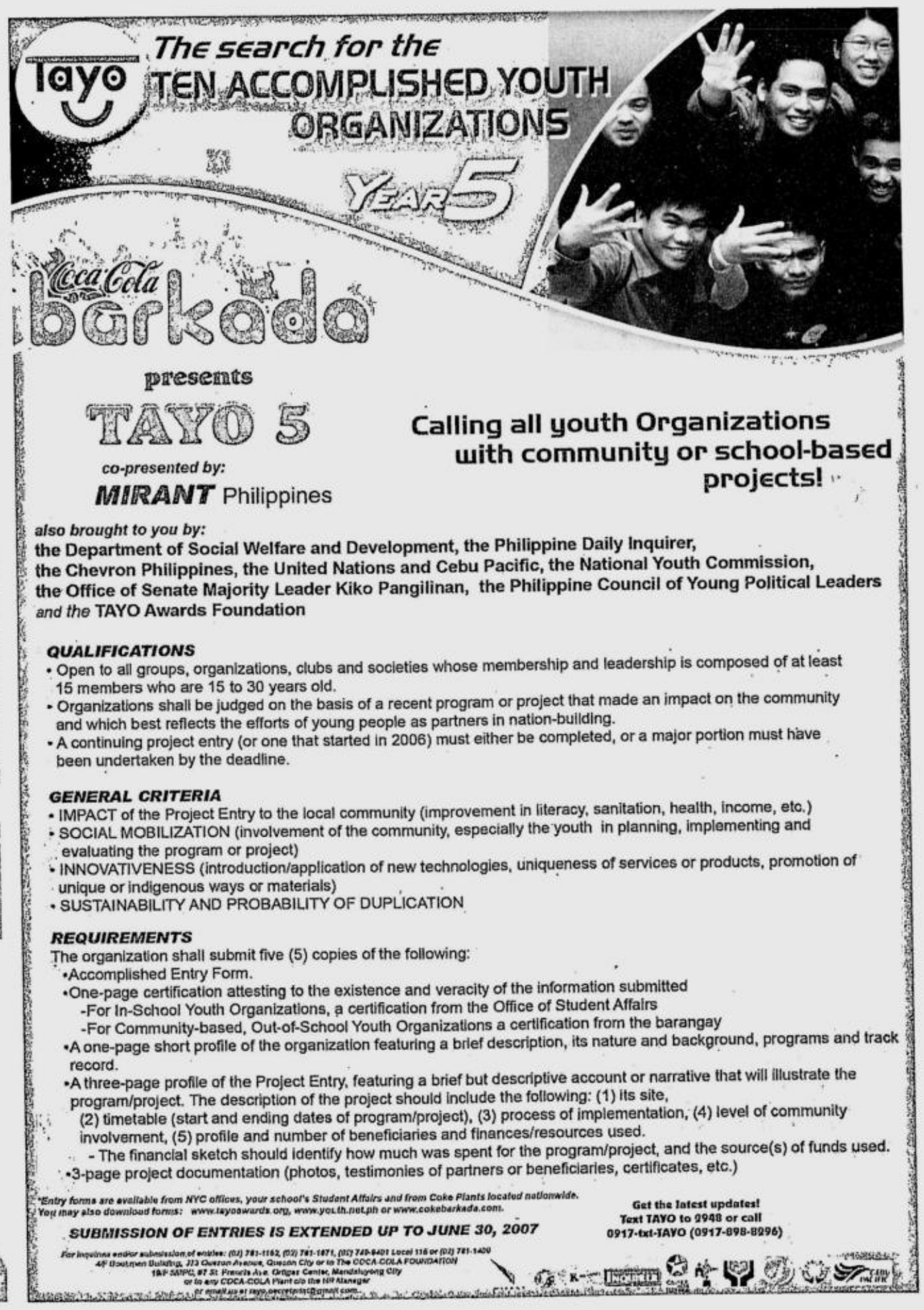
Entries with no photos will automatically be disqualified.

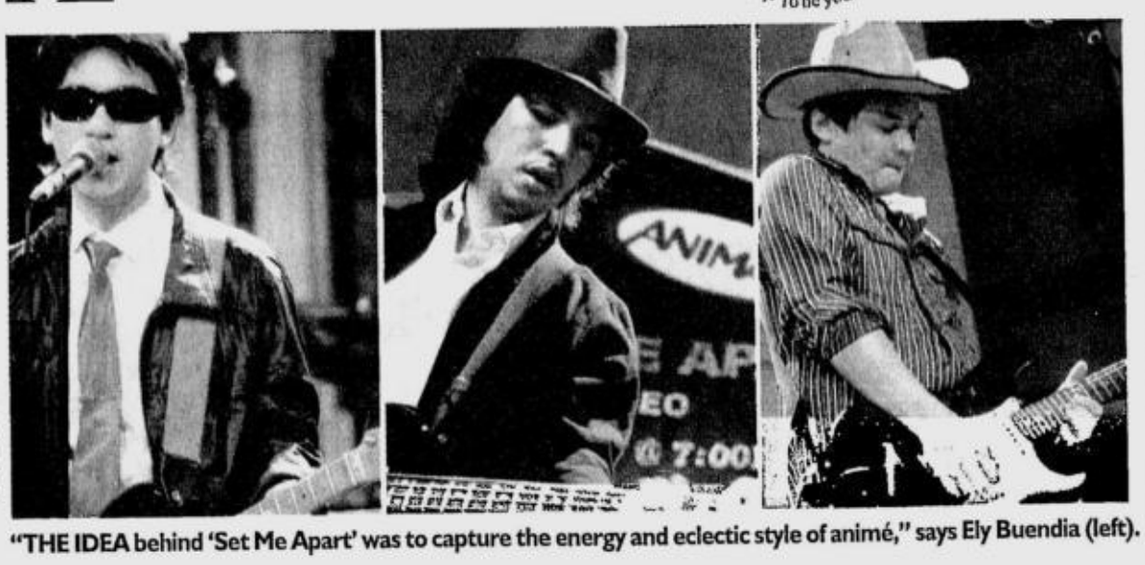
INQUIRER Lifestyle will pick the best four handy-daddies from our readers' entries and will take them shopping at Handyman where they each will receive P20,000 worth of purchases courtesy of Handyman, plus a Samsung S500 digital camera courtesy of Robinsons Appliances.

Include your name and age, your dad's name and age, your address, telephone number(s) and mobile phone number(s).

Submit your entry to Philippine Daily Inquirer, 1098 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati, attention Lifestyle. Or e-mail to dad@inquirer.com.ph. Deadline for entries is June 8.







"THE IDEA behind 'Set Me Apart' was to capture the energy and eclectic style of animé," says Ely Buendia (left).

PUPIL premieres its music video for the new Animax theme song "Set Me Apart." Spongecola frontman Yael Yuzon (inset) shows up to support his brother Yani.

Youth, freedom and animé

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

Youth channel Animax acquires a new theme song in Pupil's "Set Me Apart," a song about youthful energy and individualism

YOUTH CHANNEL ANIMAX believes in daring to be different, going beyond the ordinary and standing out in one's own style. This is why it chose hot Filipino band Pupil to pen and perform its brand-new theme song "Set Me Apart."

Pupil, which has been a staple in several Animax events all over the country, is the perfect choice for the channel. The band is not only a unique and creative music force in the Philippines, it is also—just like Animax—an inspiration for young people to live out their dreams and passions.

Musically arranged and written by Pupil lead vocalist Ely Buendia, with lyrics from band manager Diane Ventura and contributions from the rest of the band, "Set Me Apart" is a catchy and inspirational rock song that encourages young people to go out of the box while still being their own special selves.

"The idea behind 'Set Me Apart' was to capture the energy and eclectic style of animé," says Buendia. "We tried to pack as much variety in a three-minute song as we possibly could to reflect Animax's kaleidoscope of entertainment."

According to Ventura, the song embodies the current mantra and precept of the youth, which is independence.

"As the title of the song implies, 'Set Me Apart' epitomizes the young generation's need to freely and unabashedly express their individuality without being judged or criticized," she explains. "This is where Animax comes in as a youth sanctuary. Animax is a place where young people are united in their stand to be respected and lauded for their autonomy, originality and distinctiveness."

MODEL Einar Ingebrigtsen and NU107 DJ Dylan host the event, which also introduces GMA 7 artist Rhian Ramos as the new "it" girl of Animax.

Judy Chow, director of Animax Marketing, says, "We wanted to create a song that embodies the spirit and essence of the channel and vocalizes the attitudes and opinions of the youth generation. Our Animax viewers are trend-setters and leaders among their peers. 'Set Me Apart' pens down their inner thoughts and reinforces the meaning of being different. And what better way than for Pupil to create this inspirational song for Animax?"

Currently topping the charts at rock radio station NU 107, "Set Me Apart" also has a cutting-edge music video that features animation done by one of the top broadcast design and animation studios in Malaysia.

Following the band's eye-catching videos for hit tracks "Dianetic" (which was directed by Buendia and shot at the Scottish Rites Temple, entailing the use of over a hundred "retro-props" as production design, as well as a limousine and family cameos) and "Dulo ng Dila" (directed by Wincy Ong and King Palisoc and noted for its minimalist production design and editing magic), "Set Me Apart" the music video features the band members of Pupil as animé heroes.

Buendia exclaims, "It is going to be a surprise to a lot of people! 'Set Me Apart' is very special to us, in as much as it is the first time ever that we will see ourselves in animated form and by Animax, no less."

Animax is a youth channel with a broad offering of programs and lifestyle activities that cater to the interests of young people. Aside from animé, Animax offers a dynamic lineup of highly rated and popular original productions, music programs and cool lifestyle events (like fashion contests and speed-dating events) to connect with young viewers' areas of interest.

Catch the premiere of Pupil's "Set Me Apart" music video on Animax on June 8, 7 p.m.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

QUARK Henares

BRENT Javier

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A new resort in Panglao, Bohol, combines natural endowments and manmade amenities

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

BOHOL HAD ALWAYS BEEN A dream local destination of mine. Blame it on the Chocolate Hills which had always intrigued me. Blame the popular tarsiers which I had always wanted to see up close.

Recently, the travel gods granted my wish and I had the chance to finally see Bohol and its Chocolate Hills and tarsiers—and even more.

I was billeted at Eskaya Beach Resort & Spa, the much-buzzed-about brand-new luxury resort in Panglao. In no less than 25 minutes, our shiny shuttle bus transported us from Tagbilaran airport to Eskaya, which promised to give me a sweet escape from all the hustle and bustle of the metropolis.

Once I set foot on Eskaya's white sands, I totally understood what the buzz was all about.

Eskaya is the lap of luxury. Serenity and sophistication share top billing at this 16-hectare development. It's humongous. It's exclusive. It's a knockout.

'Balais'

The rustic island resort is composed of 15 single-detached thatched villas or *balais*, each one built with sturdy construction materials and amply using bamboo, *cogon* and wood for a modern Filipino look, reminiscent of the famed Amanpulo resort in Palawan. Interestingly, both resorts were designed by architect Bobby Mañosa, who is known to promote everything Filipiniana.

Eskaya has four whirlpool villas with a whirlpool good for two and an indoor garden setting, six private pool villas with whirlpool, three infinity pool villas with whirlpool, a family villa with a whirlpool good for four, and a presidential villa complete with a colonial tub and an outdoor spa.

The whirlpool villa I stayed in was both classy and cozy and it made me want to live there forever. My king-size bed was huge and I had the best sleep ever, thanks to the goose down pillows and high thread count sheets. My very spacious bathroom had a complete array of amenities, hygiene essentials and white fluffy towels.

Everything was there inside my *balai*: minibar, coffee- and tea-making facilities, safety deposit box, hair dryer, a compendium, IDD telephone access with two extensions, flat-screen television with cable, DVD player and even iPod speakers. My *balai* was complete that I found it very tempting to just stay in the

ON THE LAP/ D3

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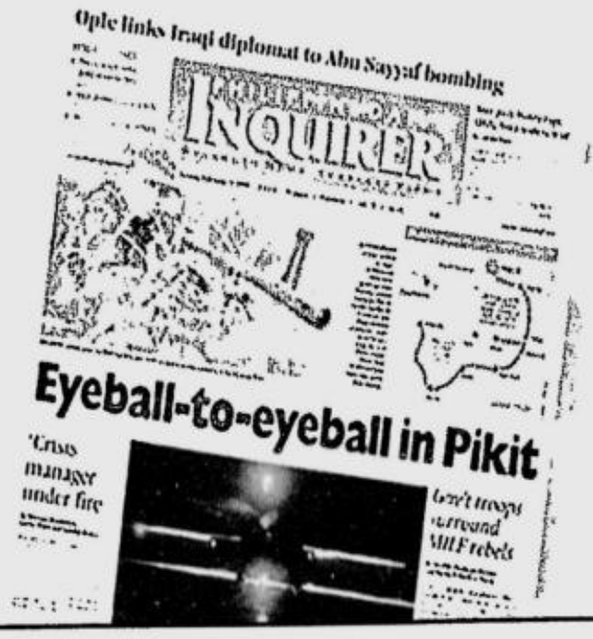


ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

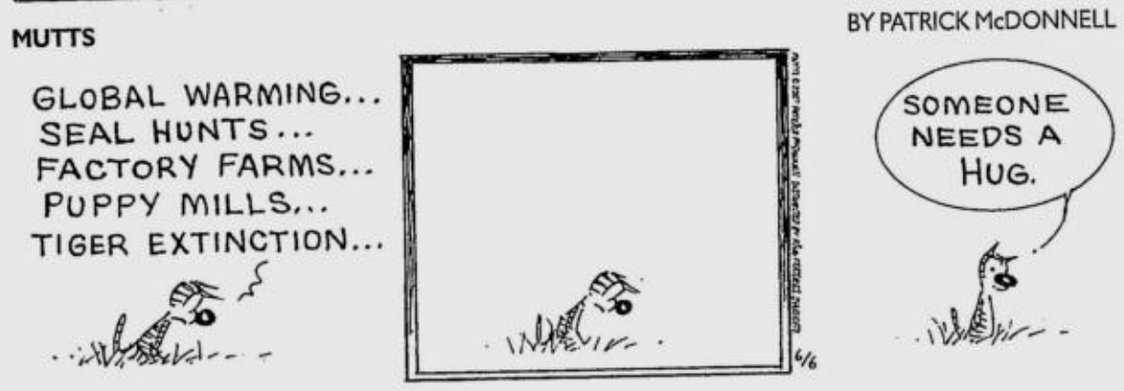
BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS

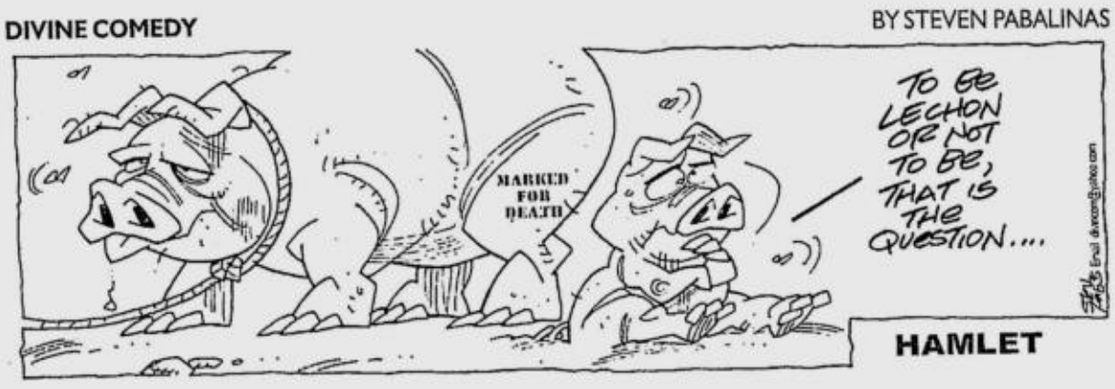
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



KIKO MACHINE

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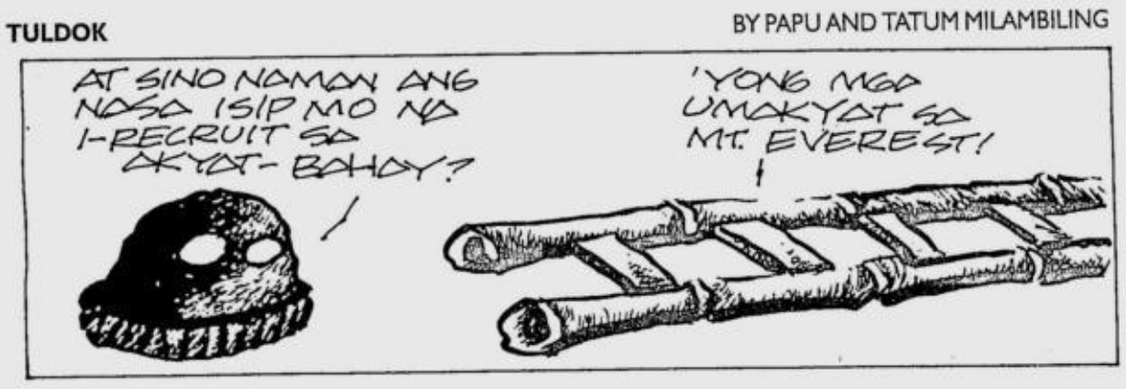
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



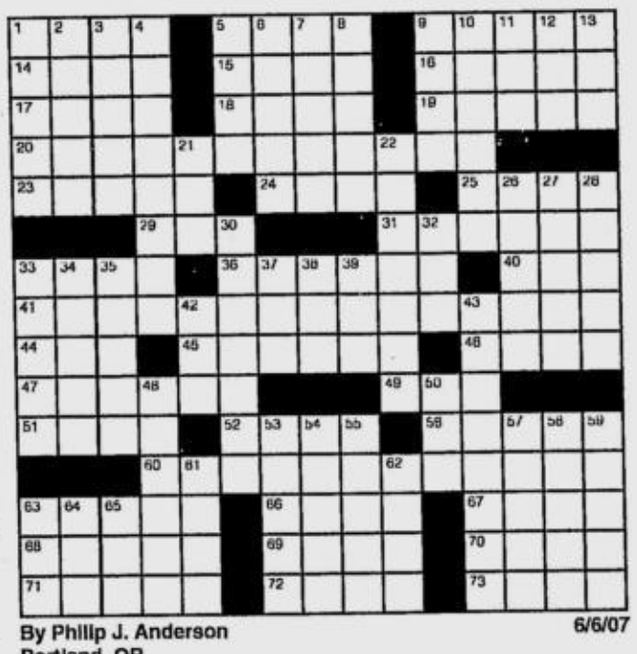
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Wound aftereffect
5 Stable female
9 Fix firmly
14 Knight's attendant
15 Revival meeting shout
16 France's longest river
17 Iraq's neighbor
18 Manuscript enc.
19 German pistol
20 Bills sent to publishers?
23 Poetic lament
24 Sm. runway aircraft
25 Air pollution
29 Loser to DDE
31 Come up with a concept
33 Gung-ho
36 Japanese mat
40 Ave. crossers
41 Bills sent to the military?
44 Rep.
45 Speechifies
46 72A model
47 Package
49 Radio static letters
51 Organic compound
52 Lessen
56 Watchful
60 Bills sent to homebuilders?
63 Grayish violet
66 Roman Eros
67 "My Friend __"
68 Sleep disorder
69 Gaucho's device
70 Storyteller?
71 Get going
72 Swedish auto
73 Evenings, to bards

DOWN
1 Nutmeg, e.g.
2 Yule song
3 Century plant
4 Rebel
5 Opposite of fem.
6 Asian nannies
7 Convened anew
8 January in Spain
9 Fashion magazine
10 Chilled dessert
11 Sizable
12 Afore
13 Austrian article
21 Whiskey grain
22 Brief look
26 Billiards shot
27 Mink's playful cousin
28 Canvas coating
30 Hollywood hopeful
32 Fizzle out
33 Wide open
34 Total vegetarian
35 Opening bars
37 In the style of
38 Hanoi holiday
39 Bunyan's tool
42 Lobster eggs
43 Manicurist's tool
48 Sharp-witted
50 Daisy Yokum's middle name
53 Saudis and Omanis
54 Pago Pago's place
55 "__ Gay"
57 Spine-tingling
58 Hire a new crew
59 Russian rulers
61 Shipshape
62 Common crustacean
63 Bell and Barker
64 Suitable
65 Actress Merkel



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
6/6/07

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	O	A	L		S	H	O	T		A	D	I	N
G	A	M	M	A		C	U	B	A		K	E	N	O
T	H	E	S	U	N	A	L	S	O	R	I	S	E	S
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			P	I	T			S	S	T				
A	F	A	R	E	W	E	L	L	T	O	A	R	M	S
M	I	M	E		I	L	E	O		S	N	O	O	T
O	N	E	L		T	E	M	P	I		N	A	I	R
C	A	N	I	S		N	O	E	S		I	N	R	I
O	L	D	M	A	N	A	N	D	T	H	E	S	E	A
				G	A	S			H	O	S			
M	A	I	D	E	N		B	O	M	B		K	G	B
E	R	N	E	S	T	H	E	M	I	N	G	W	A	Y
R	O	D	E		E	E	L	S		O	P	A	R	T
E	D	Y	S		S	W	A	K		B	O	I	S	E

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6/6/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a need to express your artistic side. You often make long-range plans because you need to have a vision that you want to follow in life. You're interested in history and politics. Your ideas can inspire others. Some of you are eccentric. You want to make the world a better place. This year an important choice awaits you. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Paul Giamatti, actor; Bjorn Borg, tennis player; Cam Neely, hockey hall-of-famer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel warm and friendly toward others today. In particular, you might want to help someone who needs assistance or sympathy from you. Great!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Many of you are daydreaming of possible wondrous fantasies today. That's just fine. We all need to dream—out of our dreams spring ideas that we shape into a reality.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Unusual philosophies, religions or metaphysical subjects will attract you today. You're intrigued with secrets and anything unusual. You want to escape from routine today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're a nurturing, caring person. Today you might be concerned for others who are less fortunate than you. No doubt, you will give them something or help them in some way.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's easy to idealize a partner or close friend today. In fact, you always like to think the best of your friends. (Because, after all, they're your friends.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If you can help a co-worker today, do it. Someone definitely needs your sympathy or your assistance. Quite possibly, the shoe is on the other foot and someone will help you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your artistic vibes and creative talents are really hot today. Your muse is sitting on your shoulder. This can also make you feel romantic and attracted to others. (Hmmm.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel sympathetic toward family members today. Look for opportunities to help a loved one. This person might need practical assistance or just a shoulder to cry on.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Trust your intuitions and hunches today. You're quite plugged in. Nevertheless, sometimes hunches are way off base. (Don't forget that part.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might want to spend money on something quite luxurious today. (Join the club, we number in the millions.) Be careful about all financial transactions. Watch your money. Confusion or deceit is remotely possible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might feel tired or sort of wishy-washy today. This feeling is gone by tomorrow. But you do feel quite idealistic and gentle toward others.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): By nature, you're a caring, compassionate person. Today, you're willing to put the needs of somebody else before your own. (You have your reasons.)

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	5	2	8	6	9	1	4	
	7						6	
		4	3	7	5	8		
	3						7	
2					4			8
6				2		9		4
8					1			2
	2						1	
		1	2	4	3	7		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 6/06

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	2	9	3	8	5	4	1	7
7	3	8	1	4	2	5	6	9
4	5	1	7	9	6	8	2	3
9	7	2	8	5	1	6	3	4
5	8	6	4	3	7	2	9	1
1	4	3	6	2	9	7	8	5
2	1	7	5	6	3	9	4	8
8	6	5	9	1	4	3	7	2
3	9	4	2	7	8	1	5	6

Difficulty Level ★★ 6/05

On the lap of luxury

JET-SKIING is just one of the many water activities the resort can arrange for its guests.

NATURE at its best

From page D1

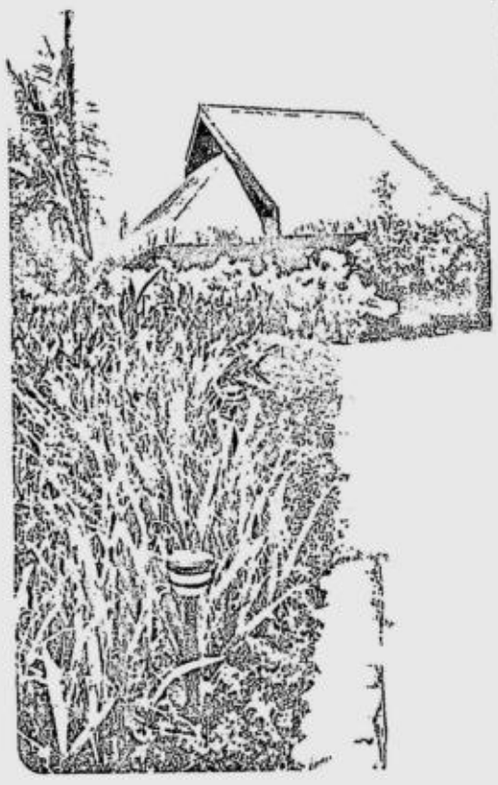
whole time.

Not that the view outside isn't as good as inside the *balais*.

The private island resort is awash with colorful bougainvillea, bird of paradise and other native blossoms that give Eskaya an exotic village-like feel. The stars are all out during nighttime while the sea hypnotizes you to just stare at it for long periods of time during the day.

There is also the Lantawan Restaurant which offers sumptuous meals, cocktail drinks and a spectacular view of the ocean, too. In fact, dining can be arranged right in front of the beach, bonfire-style, or al fresco by the poolside for those who love the water.

My most favorite part of Eskaya is its infinity pool, which is so vast and inviting one wouldn't think twice about taking a dip. If not for the cool swim-up bar overflowing with various cocktail drinks and fruit shakes, you'd think it was created by nature.



THE RESORT occupies a peaceful and private yet accessible spot in Panglao island.

Activities

Owned and run by husband-and-wife team Richard and Phoebe Lim, Eskaya is sure to be a hit among locals and tourists with its world-class amenities, unrivalled hospitality and top-quality service.

Eskaya also provides guests with a variety of fun activities.

For the athletic, Eskaya has the facilities and equipment for sports activities such as volleyball, badminton, table tennis, jet-skiing and snorkeling. For those who want total relaxation, on the other hand, a soothing massage can be had under the stars or even inside your own villa if you seek a little more privacy.

FOR THE COMPLETE Eskaya experience, a massage is a must.

Guests also have the option to visit Bohol's famous destinations such as the Chocolate Hills, Loboc River and tarsier zoo. For water babies, fun activities include island-hopping, snorkeling and scuba diving at Balicasag Island and dolphin-watching at Pamilacan Island. All these can be arranged at the resort upon arrival.

Now that's saying a lot for a 100-percent Filipino-owned resort.

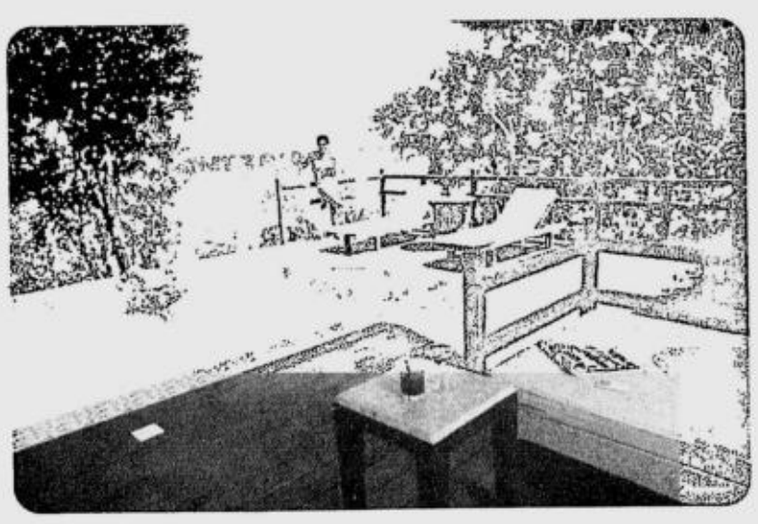
Eskaya's exotic charm has already lured celebs such as Iza Calzado, Cheska Garcia, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano and even the lovely Bea Zobel.

It has definitely lured me as well and I'm pretty sure others will be lured into going there, too. Expect some major upsurge in tourists in Bohol, thanks to Eskaya.

Why fly to Maldives when we've got a piece of paradise here in our own turf, right?

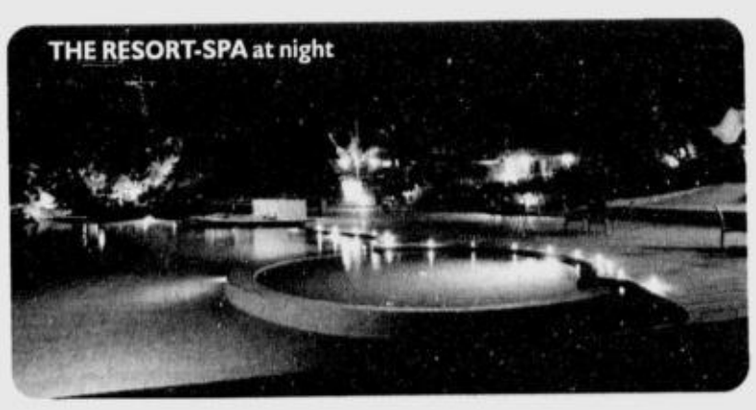
Call 7274927 or 7255597; e-mail reservations@eskayabeach.com or visit www.eskayabeach.com

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com



IN ESKAYA, you can choose to bask in your own private swimming pool.

ESKAYA has 15 single-detached thatched villas or *balais*.



THE RESORT-SPA at night

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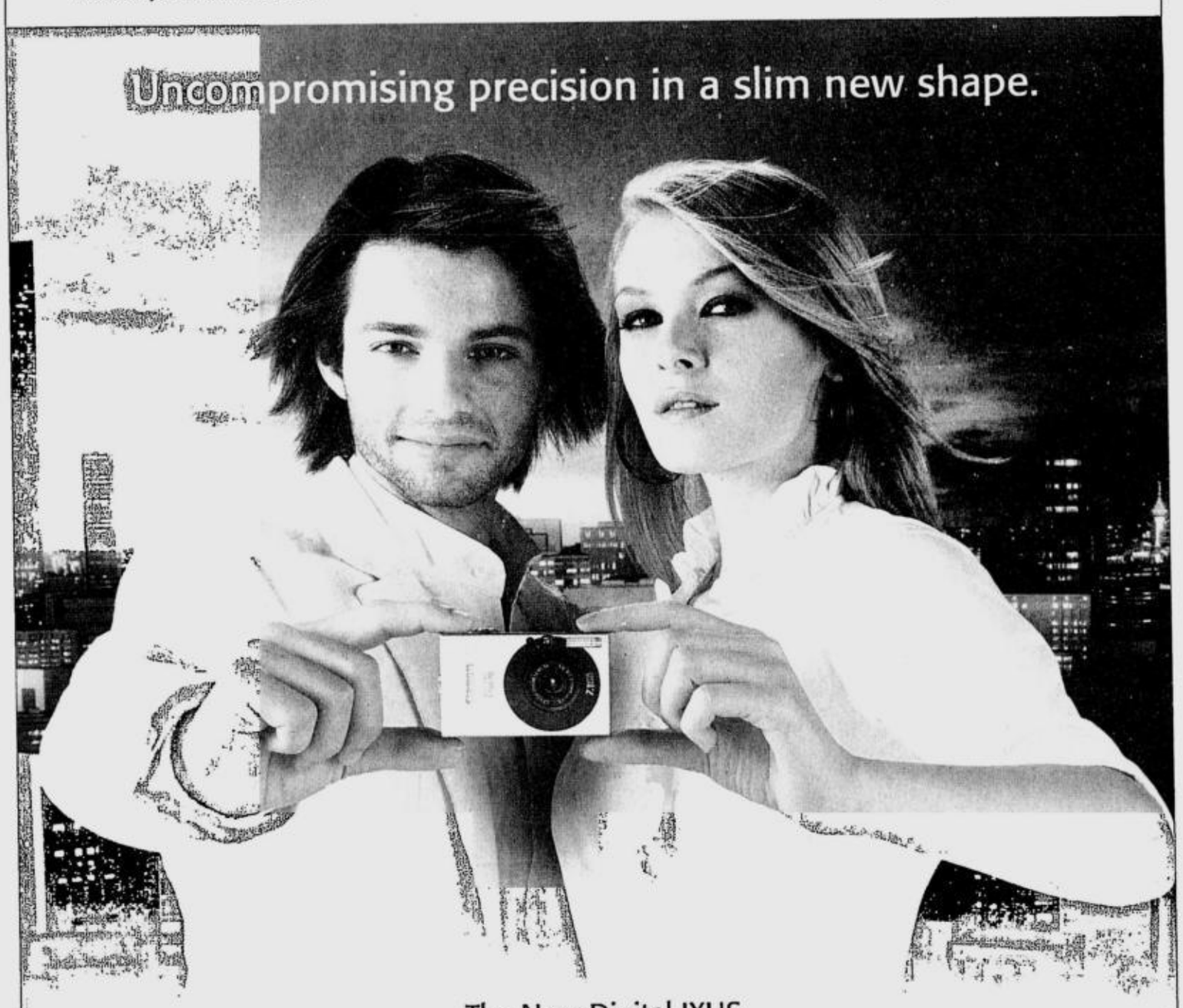

The New Digital IXUS

— IXUS 70 —
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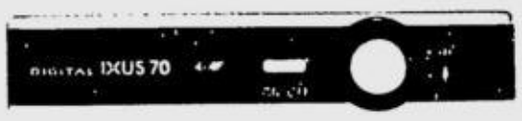
2.5" Pure Colour LCD

— IXUS 75 —
7.1 Megapixel CCD
3x Optical Zoom
3" Pure Colour LCD



Some people love ultra slim cameras. And some people love ultra sharp pictures. For people who love both, Canon introduces the new Digital IXUS 70. Measuring only 19.4mm in thickness, it features the far superior linear lens instead of a conventional tuck-and-fold type lens. The result is a level of clarity, sharpness and precision unprecedented in a digital camera this slim. What's more, it comes with the powerful DIGIC III Imaging Processor for fast and accurate operation, and a new Pure Colour LCD that helps you see and compose your photos better. It even features Multiple Face Detection for shooting spectacular-looking group photos. The slim yet sharp Digital IXUS 70. Who says you can't have it all?

Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.

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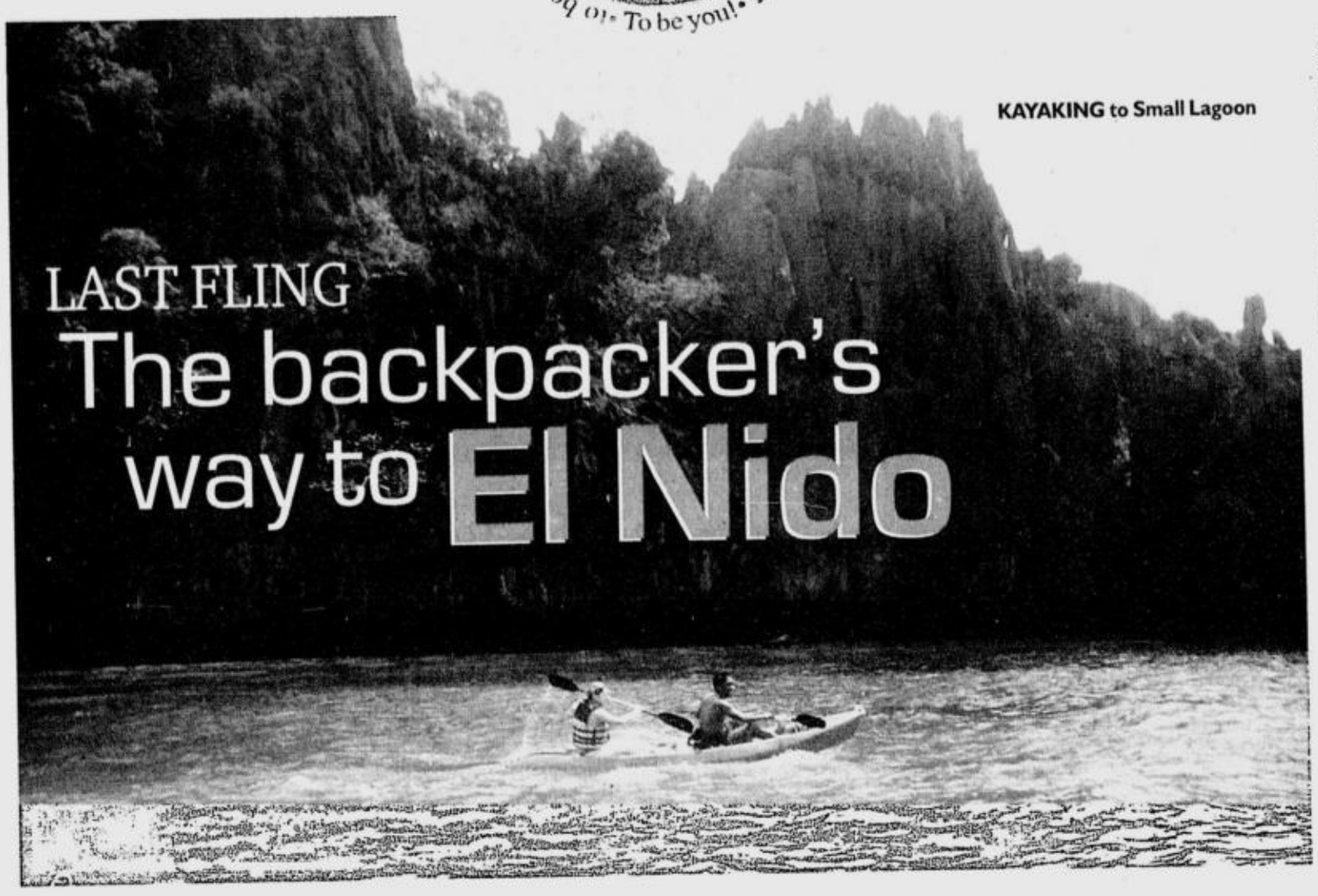
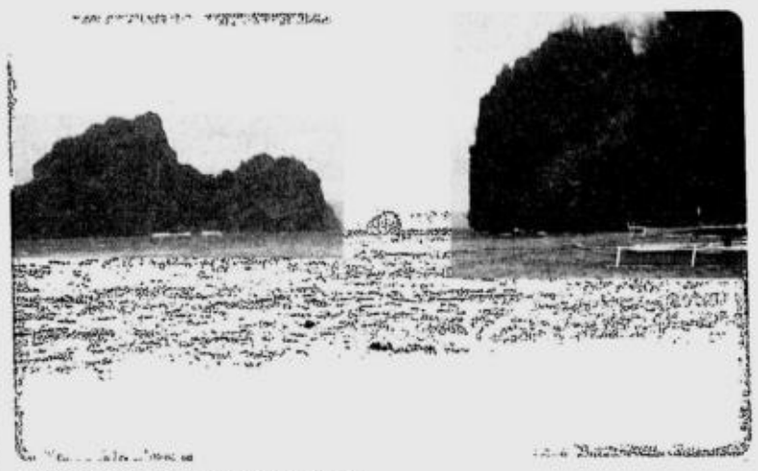


KAYAKING to Small Lagoon

LAST FLING
The backpacker's way to El Nido



BRAVING waves at Simizu Island

By Mari-An C. Santos
2bU! Contributor

WHEN TALKING ABOUT El Nido's pristine beaches, people often use hushed tones. Like the Ark of the Covenant or the Fountain of Youth, the place is elusive, mysterious and visiting it must therefore come at great expense.

But it turns out El Nido is not the exclusive domain of dollar-toting tourists. All you need, really, is stamina and a lot of time. We went there recently for the Third Kalugta'n Arts Festival.

There are two ways to go to Palawan from Manila. Air Philippines, Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines all have regular flights to Puerto Princesa. The fare averages P3,000 and takes an hour. (SeaAir flies direct to El Nido at a more prohibitive cost.)

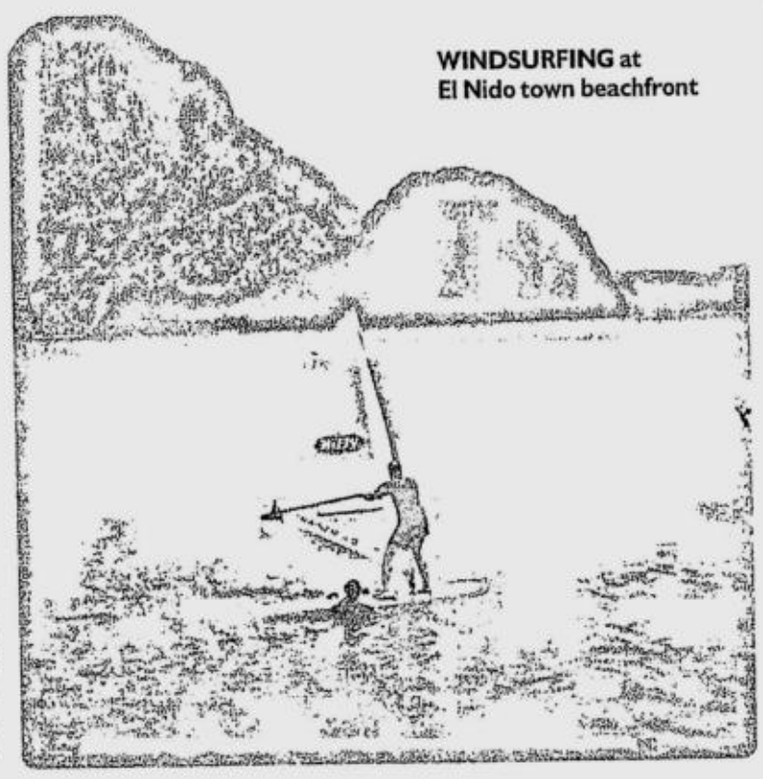
If you want a more leisurely ship ride, Negros Navigation and Super Ferry both sail there once a week. A ticket is around P2,000 and the trip takes about a day and a half.

Once in Puerto Princesa, make your way to the bus terminal at the New Public Market in San Jose. Buses leave between 5 a.m. and 9 a.m.; the fare is P250. From there, it's a nine-hour bus ride north through Roxas and Taytay before you reach El Nido.

The views on the way are varied: undulating hills, blue waters, rocky coastlines and fields dotted with huts. Bring your hat and a bandana, as the road transforms from paved to rough soon enough.

Expensive but delicious

The town of El Nido is named after the expensive but very delicious bird's nest soup of Chinese cuisine. People trek to the Taraw (limestone cliffs) that majestically rise around the town to retrieve the swiftlets' nest, to the birds' detriment. These sell for an average of P200,000 a kilo!



WINDSURFING at El Nido town beachfront

> El Nido is not the exclusive domain of dollar-toting tourists. All you need, really, is stamina and a lot of time

The beachfront is accessible from the municipal hall. The view at any time of day is amazing, and will wash your fatigue away! Accommodations are plentiful, depending on your preference and budget. Affordable cottages are located just a few paces from the beach.

El Nido is a protected area, and so marine life conservation is taken very seriously. Arvin Acosta, head of the Municipal Tourism Office, bemoans the fact that "only 14 percent of our coral reefs are still surviving."

You can choose to spend your days swimming and sunbathing. Take some good shoes if you plan to go cliff-climbing. The town is the jump-off point for island-hopping. There are so many accessible islands, and within those islands are different spots that you can visit. Tour guides usually offer packages that will take you to several locations in one go. These start at P500 per person, with a minimum of four persons per boat.

Among the must-see islands are said to be Lagen, Miniloc, Matinloc and Tres Marias Islands. Keep your eyes peeled for dolphins that just might swim beside your boat in the waters off Helicopter Island.

Snorkeling gear are also available for rent and, for an additional fee, can come with packed lunch. Establishments like the Art Café offer windsurfing lessons and have kayaks for rent.

Watch the sun set at Sea Slugs or Ricson's, then enjoy dinner as you listen to the waves. For more island nightlife, go to Balay Tubay along Calle Real. The ambience is ethnic folk, and it's the regular haunt of artists and musicians. The atmosphere is so laidback, you can grab the percussions and jam with the performers.

For breakfast, hearty meals are served by Ricson's, Balay Tubay and Aplaya Restaurant. Get your supplies from Socrates store just across Aplaya Restaurant, which sells practically everything, even hammocks.

The people of El Nido are kind, friendly and reserved. So on this beach, you won't be hounded by vendors selling pearls or offering massage services. It's also safe to leave your sarong and slippers on the sand as you swim. After all, El Nido, with its fine sand and blue-green sea, is best appreciated by just jumping into the waters!

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Too young for politics?

Or more of the same old politics?

MayMay Navidad and her father's legacy

'I made the right decision to enter the one place I thought I could not stand—politics'

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

SHAKESPEARE ONCE WROTE: "SOME are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Three years ago, MayMay Navidad was thrust to greatness. Shortly after her father was elected councilor of Digos City, Davao del Sur, he died.

She was subsequently appointed to assume her father's position in the City Council.

Now at 27 years old, she is running for a second term as councilor under the Nationalist People's Coalition.

It helped that before she was appointed councilor, she had already served as councilor for the Sangguniang Kabataan.

"To accept the appointment was not an easy decision. Yet I wanted to continue what my father started," she explains. Besides, "Digos City is where I was born and where I live. My love for the 'Lion City of the South' was another major consideration."

She credits her mother, who heads the City Social Welfare and Development Office, for guiding and encouraging her.

Thus, in her first term, she immediately arranged for the donation of water pumps and started proposing bills to improve their city.

Soon, strangers would start going up to her and thank her for her projects. She muses, "It was then that I realized that I was on the right track. I made the right decision to enter the one place I thought I could not stand—politics."

Even with her previous stint in politics, isn't she apprehensive that she will be going up against people her father's age? She quickly replies, "Being young is an advantage. It creates the impression that you are still unstained, untainted and uncorrupted."

Indeed, her fellow youth may yet play a key role in her election. In fact, one of her plans should she get elected is to enact ordinances providing venues that would wean them away from drugs.

Aside from this, she intends to sponsor ordinances that would encourage micro-businesses, and establish a system addressing the problem of vigilante killings in their place.

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Too young for politics? Or more of the same old politics?

Not just the general's daughter

Em Aglipay, daughter of Gen. Edgardo Aglipay, believes that the youth should do more than complain

EM AGLIPAY HAS BEEN MISTAKEN for, among others, a contestant for "Star Struck". She once arrived at a radio station to be interviewed and was promptly asked if she was a contestant for the popular talent search program.

This pretty and athletic 24-year-old, however, has a more serious agenda. Her dream: To represent the welfare of laborers and workers through her party, Democratic Independent Workers' Association (Diwa).

She had just started a promising career as an attorney when Diwa invited her to run as its first nominee. It was a hard decision, but she says that her desire to make a difference in this country tilted the scale.

The choice came as no surprise to the friends of this UP Law graduate. A member of the Ayala Young Leaders Alliance, she served as president of the De La Salle University Student Council, and chairperson of the Union ôf Catholic Student Councils of the Philippines.

Her peers have long known about her keen interest in labor law, and her enthusiastic participation as a member of Diwa.

She explains, "I find myself complaining about everything I find wrong in our laws, in Philippine politics, and in this country. If I turned my back on the opportunity to do something about those problems, then I lose the right to complain."

But accepting Diwa's nomination would be rising up to the challenge of change." In the words of lawyer Tita Agbayani, the fifth nominee of Diwa, "you can see in her hope for our country."

Her passion for her cause fuels her to wake up as early as 3 a.m. to travel outside Manila, either by land, by plane, or by Ro-Ro. Since Diwa has to court voters all over the country, she attends campaign sorties in every region, and is a regular guest speaker at conventions and youth camps all over the country. She also meets and forms alliances with non-government organizations, such as the National Confederation of Tricycle Drivers and Operators Association of the Philippines. One of her more memorable experiences while on the campaign trail was when she spoke at a high school graduation in Padre Burgos, Leyte. She laughingly narrates, "While waiting for the graduation to begin, a family approached me. I thought that they wanted me to take their picture. It turned out they wanted to have their picture taken with me." When she needs guidance, she turns to her mentor, former PNP Chief Gen. Edgardo Aglipay, for guidance.

Should she be elected as party-list representative, she will support a nationwide, across-the-board increase of P125 in the minimum wage, as well as stiffer penalties for violations of labor laws. Cooperatives for rural laborers, fisher folk and farmers are also in her agenda. Some have commented though that she may be too young for this position, where she will be working with colleagues twice her age. Em counters, "It is precisely because of my youth that I am fit for this job. Because of my idealism, I refuse to accept that a wrong cannot be changed just because it's been there for the longest time. I will struggle for what is right even when the system leads us to give up." *GBT*

KENN Pascual Tobias

Kenn's campaign kicks off

At just 21 years old, Kenn is ready to parlay his Public Administration degree into a stint as councilor of Sta. Cruz, Laguna

KENN PASCUAL TOBIAS had not yet graduated from college when he filed his candidacy for Councilor of Sta. Cruz, Laguna. At 21 years old, just three years above legal age, Kenn is ready to parlay his Public Administration degree into a stint on the Municipal Council.

Laguna Governor Teresita Lazaro was looking for candidates to fill up the Lakas-CMD slate when someone presented Kenn's resume. Impressed by his stints in the UP Diliman University Student Council and in UP Gawad Kalinga, he was promptly recruited. It was a fortuitous event, as Kenn had always dreamed of becoming a public officer as early as his junior year in high school. With this goal in mind, he joined the Gawad San Luis foundation, an organization of youth leaders in Laguna. He also pursued studies in Public Administration at UP Diliman. So determined was he that he had originally planned to run as an independent candidate, even if the two opposing candidates for Mayor of Sta. Cruz are both his uncles.

Campaigning, he says, has been quite hectic. Every morning, he goes around the houses in his town, together with several volunteers who distribute his leaflets and sample ballots. He attends barangay caucuses at night and regularly sends letters to community leaders asking for their support. Even ordinary folk are pitching in. During a proclamation rally, he ran out of 20-peso bills to buy mineral water. Unfortunately, all his volunteers were also empty-handed that day. A juice vendor in the crowd overheard his problem and offered drinks to him, for free.

It is, after all, for them that he runs. He plans to promote agribusiness as a source of livelihood for his townmates, and to establish a fuel refilling station owned by tricycle operators and drivers. As a fresh graduate himself, he also wants to promote college scholarships for the deserving. According to him, while Sta. Cruz is the capital of Laguna, it has long been overtaken by its more developed neighbors. To place his town at par with Laguna's developed towns is his dream.

In a country where every candidate is saying the same things, Kenn's honesty and candidness is refreshing. When asked about his interests aside from his stint selling real estate, he quickly pipes up, "I am still an eligible bachelor so I need to look for my Miss Right." With his boundless love for his town and his enthusiasm for life, finding that special someone should be the least of his concerns. *GBT*

Makati's genuine choice?

The unassuming and soft-spoken Erwin Genuino steps up to the challenge of representing Makati

TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD ERWIN Genuino has a lot on his plate. To run for congressman of the 2nd district of Makati, the country's premier business and financial district, would be enough to daunt the most seasoned politician. Yet the unassuming and soft-spoken Erwin is relentless.

Everyday, he does the rounds of houses, speeches before NGOs or youth groups, and interviews with the press.

At 9 p.m., he goes up on stage for daily barangay rallies which last until the wee hours of the morning. This is aside from his duties as vice-president for legal affairs of the Trace Group of Companies, and his weekly column in Tanod, a daily Metro Manila tabloid.

So far, his efforts seem to be paying off. He shares that during their rallies, the audience doesn't go home even if it rains. He adds, "When I go into a house filled with my opponent's streamers on the outside, I find my posters well-preserved in the living rooms, bedrooms and bathrooms. It is really heart-warming."

Aside from his efforts in campaigning, Erwin credits the warm turnout to his work in the Welfare Integration Network, which has since evolved into a group called Tropang G. A loose alliance of individuals and organizations, it conducts health awareness and sports development projects, livelihood training seminars and feeding programs.

Aside from his brother Anthony who is also running for councilor of the 1st District of Makati, there are no other politicians in his family. To help him plot his strategy, he has seasoned campaign managers, some of whom used to work with his opponents.

If elected, his Legal Management degree from Ateneo and his law degree from UP would work to his advantage. He intends to file bills that would provide further benefits to solo parents, as well as to military personnel. He also plans to allocate funds for a massive low-cost housing project and for free or cheap medicine.

With all these plans, you might wonder if he has time for a special someone. He has been romantically linked with Anne Curtis, who was by his side when he filed his Certificate of Candidacy. "We're friends. Like me, she's into charity work so she helps me out when she can."

What Erwin is very explicit about though, is his concern for his district. "When people think of Makati, they think of Ayala, Forbes, Dasmariñas, etc. Most people are not aware of Pembo, Rizal, Comembo and the other barangays that remain steeped in poverty right beside the financial center of the country." So even if he has been dubbed as too nice and gentle to become a politician, he is undeterred. "Makati is a challenge to any veteran politician who enters the fray, more so to a political neophyte. But as I like to say, *"yung maliit, nakakapuwing."* *GBT*

Kris Ablan's weighty inheritance

'I am not the next Roque Ablan, Jr.; I am the first Kris Ablan'

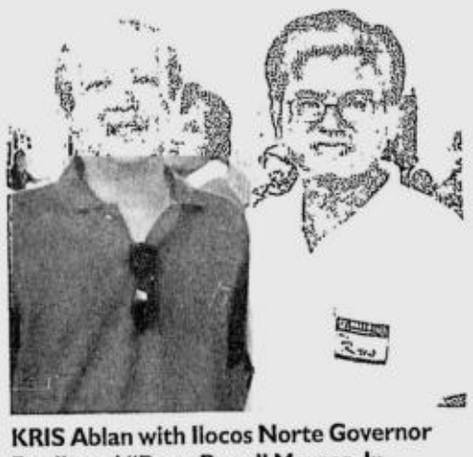
FOR KRIS ABLAN, POLITICS IS REALLY in his blood. His father is Congressman Roque Ablan, Jr. His grandfather, the late Roque Ablan, Sr. was once governor of Ilocos Norte. Now, at 29 years old, he is making his first foray into local politics with his candidacy for Provincial Board member of the first district of Ilocos Norte under Lakas-CMD.

His political pedigree seems to serve him well. Once, while shaking hands with an old lady in a remote town, he was taken aback when she suddenly started crying and hugging him. Tearfully, she recounted that his grandmother, the late Manuela Ablan, had helped her before. These days, his father, who is also the Provincial Chair of his political party, is mentoring and teaching him the nuances of campaigning.

Yet, on his own, Kris has enough credentials that could match any other candidate's. A Legal Management graduate of Ateneo de Manila University, he was representative of the Ateneo Sanggunian. He went on to win as chair of the UP Diliman Student Council, defying initial expectations that he would lose out to the candidate of the then-prevailing student political party. While finishing his law studies at UP, he worked with his father in lobbying for various bills in Congress. Recently, before he filed his candidacy, he served as an Associate Solicitor at the Office of the Solicitor General.

Mornings usually find him having breakfast meetings as early as 6 a.m. When he does not have a speaking engagement or a LAKAS-CMD campaign rally, he makes the rounds of houses and public markets. "I've also started to dance with my volunteers, my nephew and my niece after my speech in some political rallies to attract more people," he chuckles. During these sorties, he shares his plans to seek funding to improve benefits to teachers and to encourage Ilocano *balikbayans* to put up businesses in the province. He also intends to facilitate the construction of the Ilocos Norte International Convention Center and Hotel. True to his law background, he will propose the establishment of arbitration as a standard solution in settling disputes. He calls his province "an unpolished gem," as it still has a lot to offer aside from the famous *bagnet*, *longganisa*, *chichacorn* and beaches.

Does he think that his youth is an advantage? Without skipping a beat, Kris answers, "Every time I shake hands with people, I am told *"naka-ub-ubing ka"* (You look so young). On the one hand, it's a good factor because people are drawn to me and I can immediately converse with them that I just look young but I am already a lawyer. On the other hand, some people get skeptical. I have to remind them that I just look young but I am very well qualified and of age and experience." Certainly, it is an experience honed in part by growing up under the tutelage of his province's political bigwigs. Yet while he is grateful for their guidance, he thinks awhile and then adds, "I am not the next Roque Ablan Jr.; I am the first Kris Ablan." *GBT*



KRIS Ablan with Ilocos Norte Governor Ferdinand "Bong Bong" Marcos, Jr.

Bohol's new face?

'I want to serve my district since I have seen how much difference a public servant can make,' says Adam Jala

AFTER HANDILY HURDLING THE BAR exams last year, Adam Jala, 27, is set for another challenge—running for representative of the 3rd District of Bohol under Lakas-CMD.

Although he is the son of the incumbent representative, he is not exempted from having to court votes. He goes around all 49 towns of his district, talking to local leaders and speaking in rallies. He breaks out into a smile while recalling his very first public speaking engagement where he had to speak to hundreds of people in straight Visayan language.

Why run as representative when he could start with, say, councilor? Adam readily answers, "The task of a representative is very unique. He is elected only locally, yet he is tasked to create laws for the country. This is a position that needs both local and national perspective."

His law degree from Ateneo de Manila University, as well as his familiarity with the problems of his district, would also come in handy. He says that he would rather run for office while still young, as he believes that his youth is an advantage.

"Youth means idealism. The intention for joining public service is pure and untainted, and service is the utmost goal. The drive is public service, not politics."

He brushes aside criticisms that since he is young, he is inexperienced and irresponsible. If younger candidates start to doubt their own capabilities, he argues, this would create a culture of apathy among the youth.

If elected, he intends to schedule regular meetings with local leaders so that the plan for each town would be in harmony with those of the other towns, and with that of the whole district as well.

He points out the need to provide basic infrastructure and social services in all parts of the district.

Proudly, he says, "Our district has great potential for tourism. The Loboc River, the tarsiers, and Chocolate Hills are located here. Since I was 13 years old, I have grown up with my father in public service. I want to serve my district since I have seen how much difference a public servant can make." *GBT*

How they fared in the elections

Win some, lose some

1) Kris Ablan
Kris won as provincial board member of Ilocos Norte. For him, the election day was the longest day of his life. Looking back, Kris laments that despite voters' demand for a responsible and corruption-free government, some voters themselves sold their votes during the last election.

2) Erwin Genuino
Unfortunately, Erwin failed in his bid to become the congressman of the second district of Makati. But with a smile, he declares that he did better than the results would show, and that he learned more about himself from the whole experience.

3) MayMay Navidad
MayMay won as councilor of Digos City, Davao del Sur. She is honored by the mandate given to her by her constituents, and vows to continue her father's legacy of public service. Her father was also a councilor until his death three years ago.

4) Kenn Tobias
Kenn Tobias failed to bag a seat in the Sta. Cruz town council of Laguna. But he is thankful for the lessons in campaign planning and the opportunity to touch base with the people.

5) Em Aglipay
As of now, things are looking tough for the Democratic Independent Workers Association (Diwa), the party-list candidate. After voting on election day, Em said she proceeded to Diwa's office to assist in poll watching. She said Diwa could have run a more solid campaign. It was the party-list group's first try in the party-list election.

6) Adam Jala
Adam Jala won as congressman of the third district of Bohol. He succeeds his father.

2BU! REVIEW

Wireless and loving it

WIRELESS routers are a relatively affordable way to enjoy cable-free living.

Don't let cables cramp your Internet surfing style. You can turn your own home into a Wifi hotspot

By Pam Pastor

I USED TO SLEEP BESIDE A TANGLED mess of wires. My laptop's power adaptor, Internet cable, camera and mobile phone chargers, camera's USB cable, iPod's USB cable and earphones make up my very own hi-tech nest.

So much for a real wireless lifestyle.

To make things worse, for a long time my cable connection was constantly spotty, no thanks to my faulty cable. One wrong move and my connection would die, cutting off all-important YM conversations and killing intense blogging sessions.

I was then constantly rooted to one place. My laptop defeated its purpose; putting it on my lap was a sure way to end my Internet happy hour. There was even a time I crashed on the couch for days because that was the only place the cable could reach.

Back then, the aching back and listless sleep seemed worthy sacrifices for this incurable Internet junkie. It didn't even matter that people would walk into the living room to spot me, pajama-clad and sprawled on the couch, sleeping with my mouth open.

But I knew I needed help and so I called my tech-savvy friends. They had two words for me: wireless routers.

I soon learned that these little machines can turn your home into a Wifi hotspot, as long as you have a DSL or cable connection. And the great part is they don't cost a lot when you think of what they can do. They're normally sold for P2,350-P2,750.

TP-Link, a huge manufacturer of home networking products in China, has been bringing in wireless routers and other networking devices to the country in its attempt to explore the global market. Its products, which have been reaping awards for quality, price and design, are available through many distributors around the country.

I tested one of its routers (the best-selling WR642G) and was soon basking in the glory of having wireless connection at home. Things became a lot easier, and multitasking a breeze. I was able to watch videos on YouTube while dyeing my hair pink in the kitchen and check my e-mail while drying my hair.

Mobility isn't just the big payoff. Having a wireless connection at home allows several computers to access the connection at the same time.

It worked really well for me since my mom was rocking her new laptop and discovering the wonders of YM and its many audibles. Our three computers in the house were all able to go online simultaneously—even the desktop, thanks to the USB adapter.

That meant my brother and I could send YouTube links to each other even if he was just in another room.

And if you are tech-savvy enough to know the ins and outs of MySpace and Friendster but not tech-savvy enough to mess with connections and settings, TP-Link offers tech support to make life a little easier.

Because each home setup is unique, the distributors can also offer assistance in choosing which products you would need to build your own Wifi zone. Just make sure your neighbor isn't stealing your connection.

Now I still sleep beside a tangled mess of wires—but minus one. Thanks to the magic of wireless routers, I can keep an eye on my Multiply's comments board even while taking a shower. Not that I intend to. Really.

For more info, call 7261788 or visit www.tp-link.com.

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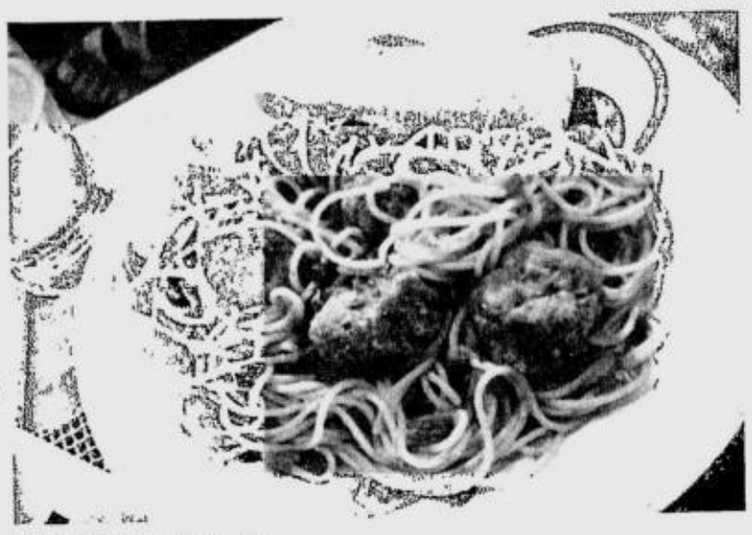
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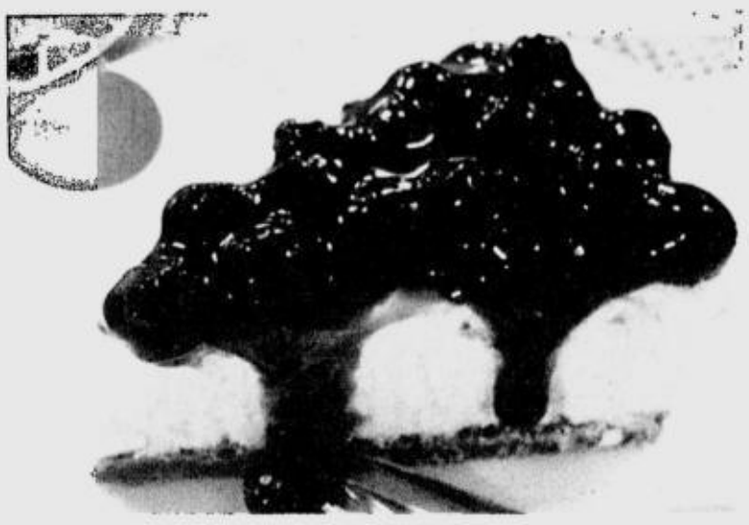

ABAN'S homemade cheesecake

At Pizzeria Toscana, every dish is a labor of love

A taste of Tuscany in Manila

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

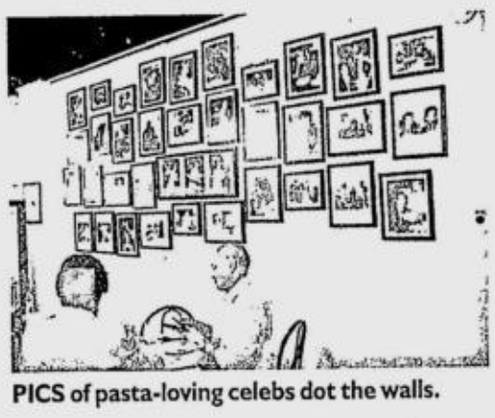
CHEF ANGEL ABAN WAS DUMBFOUNDED. Some customers had just told her they found out about her restaurant, which has been open for only three months, from a blog.

Flattered but confused, Aban ran over to her 9-year-old son and asked, "What's a blog?"

Such is the story many patrons of Pizzeria Toscana tell the owners. While a bit hidden by a condo cluster in a side street in Manila, this quaint and homey resto has become a favorite haunt of bloggers and foodies.

The brainchild of Aban and her partner, Anthony Parungao, Pizzeria Toscana was the result of the culinary courses the two had taken at Amici de Don Bosco.

They had began by cooking only for friends and family, until a commercial unit-turned-PC warehouse near their homes became vacant. Despite having day jobs (Parungao is a business director for sales at a well-known bank, while Aban is a professor at San Beda) and zero experience in the restaurant business, the two jumped at the chance to fulfill a dream.


PICS of pasta-loving celebs dot the walls.

"We told ourselves that if someone else put up a restaurant there, we'd never forgive ourselves," Parungao said. "So we went ahead and opened up our own."

Food and family

Tuscan cuisine, as Parungao put it, is essentially about family. So the resto is managed in true family fashion: Parungao and Abad themselves do the cooking, the former specializing in pizza and meat dishes and the latter pasta and desserts. Everything on the menu is indeed a labor of love.

The same close-knit vibe suffuses the small 30-seater restaurant. Family members painted the walls and refurbished second-hand chairs, and photos of the makeover process adorn the walls. There are also framed paparazzi shots of celebrities eating or cooking pasta—Richard Gere, John Wayne, even Sophia Loren.

Despite never having been to Tuscany, Parungao and Aban decided on this specific type of cuisine because they were challenged by the creativity it entailed.

"Tuscany has a lot of mountainous areas, so the people make do with what's available. I like that because you're forced to be inventive," Parungao said.

And it shows in their dishes. The menu has the usual staples (Puttanesca pasta, P170; Chicken Calzone, P270; Pepperoni pizza, P295), but there are signature dishes as well.

These include Bramasole pizza (P270), topped with mozzarella, tomatoes, anchovies, and scrambled quail eggs. The Salsa di Norcino pasta (P170) is a spicy dish of smoked sausages, button mushrooms, and fennel seeds in tomato sauce. The hearty Pasta Polpette (P170) has generous helpings of meatballs, and is a meal in itself.

The couple's creativity is most evident in the resto's monthly specials. For June, it's Bacalla Pizza (P270), a surprisingly tasty dish with cod fish toppings. The idea for June's offering came about when a Japanese customer kept asking if Pizzeria Toscana had cod fish pizza. Since they already had fish on their menu (Bacalla alla Livornese, P150), the couple decided to create a pizza for the customer, and Bacalla Pizza was born.

"Probably one of the reasons people keep coming back is because we're pretty generous with our toppings," Parungao said.

Busy schedules

Pizzeria Toscana hopes to expand its business, but fears it might lose its "family" touch. As it is, Parungao and Abad find themselves rushing home from work to operate the restaurant. The resto is open only from 6:30-10 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays.

With such busy schedules, Parungao said that most expansion they could do within the next few months would be "to be open for lunch on weekends."

But neither of them is complaining. As Parungao put it, cooking is therapeutic for him, and he doesn't see the restaurant as a job.

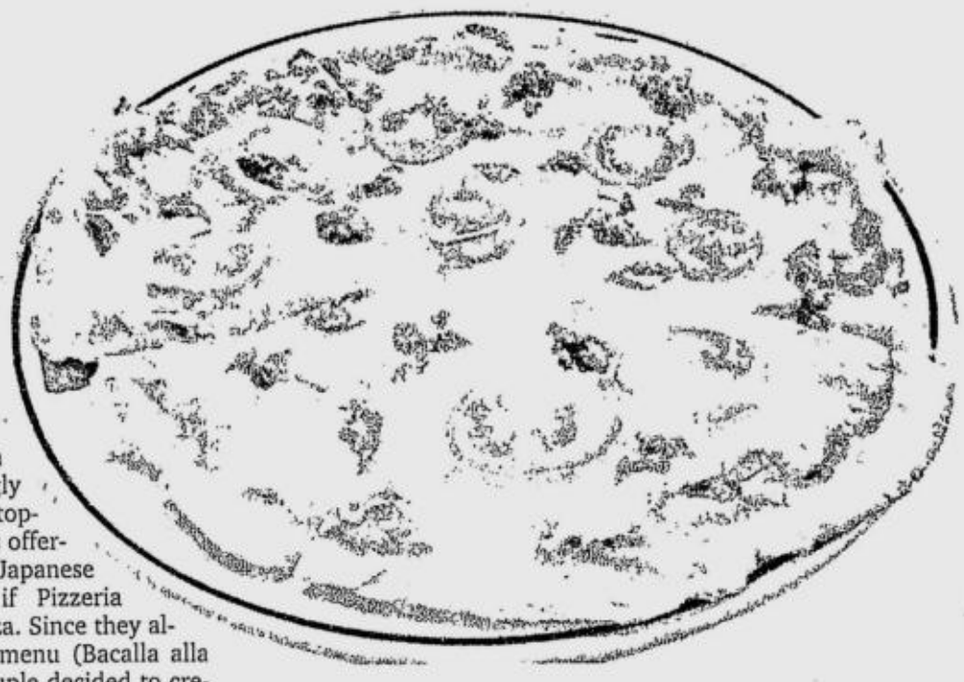
"Some people like to go to the bars or play billiards after work. Me, I cook pizza."

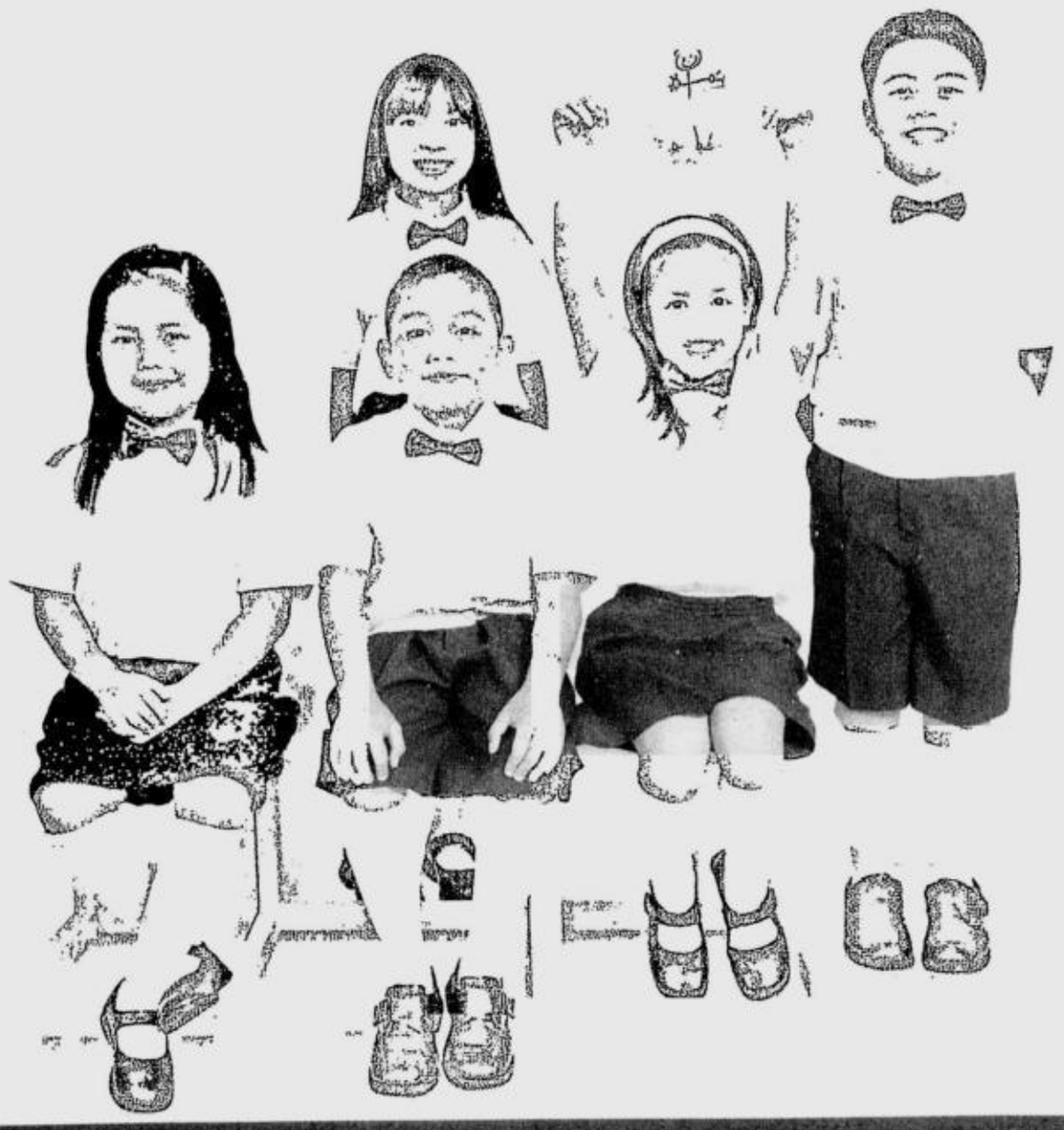
As for Aban, she also bakes killer blueberry cheesecakes in her spare time.

It's quite rare for anyone to fulfill his or her dreams and get paid for it. For Aban and Parungao, Pizzeria Toscana is doing just that.

The only downside is, "Our friends are very happy for us, but they're also quite sad because we don't have the time to cook for them anymore!" said Aban.

Pizzeria Toscana is at G/F Dunville Condominium, 1-A Castilla corner Valencia Streets, New Manila. Call 4113550 or 09178259546 or e-mail Toscana.pizzeria@yahoo.it. They deliver within the vicinity of Valencia Hills, Gilmore Heights, Xavier Hills, Garden Island Condoville, and Granada Street.


YUMMY Bacalla Pizza



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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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INSIDE

Mission 'Impostora' Sneak Peek /F4

Who's scared of horror movies? /G1

Johnny Depp, 'Pirates' bag popcorn prize at MTV Movie Awards

UNIVERSAL CITY, CALIFORNIA—Captain Jack Sparrow was the big winner at the MTV Movie Awards as "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" was named best movie and its star, Johnny Depp, won for best performance.

Depp joined "Pirates" producer Jerry Bruckheimer to accept the Golden Popcorn trophy.

"This is the man who did it all right here, Johnny Depp," Bruckheimer said Sunday. "Without him, we wouldn't be here."

"I'd like to thank this man and Disney for not firing me first," Depp quipped.

Other big winners during the live broadcast from the Gibson Amphitheater included Mike Myers, who won the MTV Generation Award, and Sacha Baron Cohen, who collected two trophies.

Cohen earned the comedic performance prize for his starring turn in "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan."

"Unfortunately, Borat can't be here tonight," he joked. "He's been feeling the pressures of fame and had to check himself into rehab."

Cohen also claimed best-kiss honors for his smooch with Will Ferrell in "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby." The two comedians shared a long, passionate kiss—culminating in a roll-around-on-the-floor makeout session—as they accepted their awards.

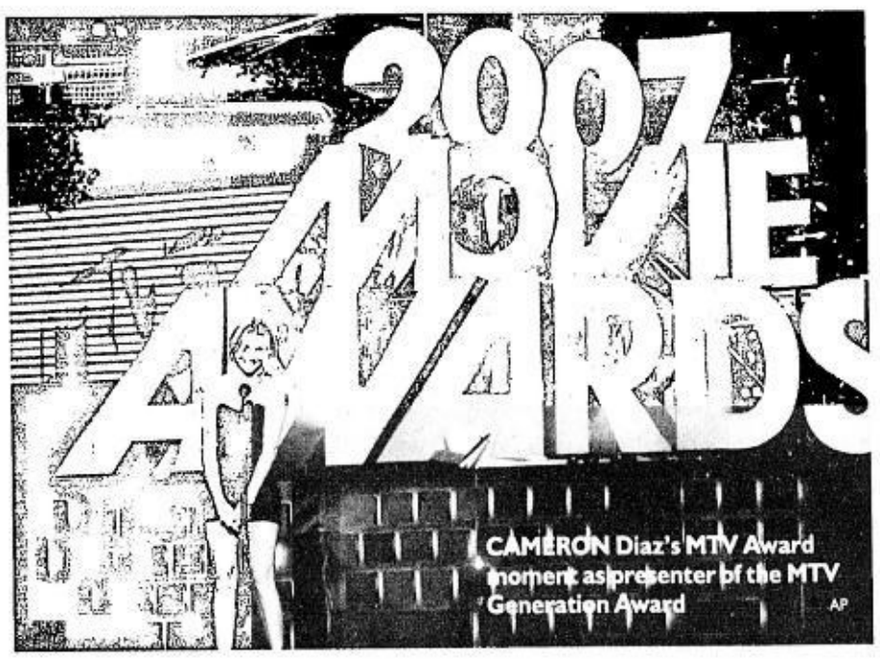
The movie prizes were almost upstaged by a star who wasn't nominated for any: Paris Hilton.

JOHNNY/ F2

A MUSICAL performance from Rihanna REUTERS

JOHNNY Depp, best performance award for "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" AP

WILL Ferrell (left) and Sacha Baron Cohen, best kiss in "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby" AP



CAMERON Diaz's MTV Award moment as presenter of the MTV Generation Award AP

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning June 1

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End
Walt Disney Pictures

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	1	Pirates of the Caribbean	$43.2 mln	2
2	☆	Knocked Up	$29.3 mln	1
3	2	Shrek the Third	$26.7 mln	3
4	☆	Mr. Brooks	$10.0 mln	1
5	3	Spider-Man 3	$7.5 mln	5
6	5	Waitress	$2.0 mln	5
7	☆	Gracie	$1.4 mln	1
8	4	Bug	$1.2 mln	2
8	6	28 Weeks Later	$1.2 mln	4
10	7	Disturbia	$1.1 mln	8

This Week, Last Week — Weeks in Release

☆ New release

Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday

REUTERS

PARIS (right) is shown in the back seat of a car with her mother Kathy Hilton in this frame grab from TMZ.com video, as she arrives at the Men's Central Jail Central Booking in downtown LA. REUTERS

Paris Hilton pops surprise at MTV Awards

UNIVERSAL CITY, CALIFORNIA—PARIS Hilton expressed fear about her upcoming jail sentence while making a surprise visit to the MTV Movie Awards, saying she was "scared" but ready to do the time.

"I am trying to be strong right now," said Hilton, who wore a black strapless dress and jewels to the event Sunday. She stopped briefly to pose for photos and speak to reporters.

The hotel heiress, ordered to report to jail by Tuesday for violating her probation in an alcohol-related reckless driving case, said her family, friends and fans have helped her prepare for her nearly three-week sentence behind bars.

"I've received thousands of letters from around the world of support and it's been inspirational and really helped me," she said. "I did have a choice to go to a pay jail. But I declined because I feel like the media portrays me in a way that I'm not. That's why I wanted to go to county, to show that I can do it and I'm going to be treated like everyone else. I'm going to do the time, I'm going to do it the right way."

When Hilton was sentenced May 4, Superior Court Judge Michael T. Sauer ruled that she would not be allowed any work release, furloughs or use of an alternative jail or electronic monitoring in lieu of jail.

Though a judge sentenced her to 45 days behind bars, Hilton is expected to serve only 23 days because of a state law that requires shorter sentences for good behavior.

Hilton said the jail sentence had forced her to reflect.

"Even these past couple weeks, it's completely changed my life," she said. "Even though it's a scary thing I'm using it in a positive way and when I come out, I can't wait to start my new life and be even stronger than I am now."

Johnny Depp, 'Pirates' bag...

From page F1

The heiress, who must report to Los Angeles County Jail by midnight Tuesday, caused a commotion when she arrived on the ruby carpet outside the amphitheater. Wearing a ruffled black dress and dazzling jewels, she flashed her trademark coy smile as she posed for photos and talked with reporters.

"I'm really scared but I'm ready to face my sentence," she said. "Even though this is a really hard time, I have my family, my friends and my fans to support me, and that's really helpful."

Host Sarah Silverman cracked a crude joke at Hilton's expense to open the show. When the camera panned to Hilton, she was not smiling.

Then the focus turned to films. MTV's irreverent mix of honors includes prizes for best fight and best villain, plus awards for aspiring filmmakers.

Jack Nicholson was the winning villain, capturing the Golden Popcorn trophy for his mobster role in "The Departed." The fight prize went to Gerard Butler, who battled "The Uber Immortal" in the epic "300."

The breakthrough performance prize went to 9-year-old Jaden Smith, who starred opposite his father, Will Smith, in "The Pursuit of Happyness." He accepted his award by video from Toronto with his dad by his side and his mom behind the camera.

The two-hour program was punctuated by musical performances. Rihanna and Jay-Z paired up on her new song, "Umbrella," and soul songstress Amy Winehouse sang her mega hit, "Rehab."

The 16-year-old awards show unveiled two new categories Sunday: Best movie spoof and best summer movie you haven't seen yet. Andy Signore, a filmmaker from Pennsylvania, won for "United 300," a hybrid spoof of "300" and "United 93."

"Transformers," due July 3, was named the best as-yet-unseen summer film.

MTV viewers voted by telephone, text message and Internet to choose the winners in all categories.

GERARD Butler, best fight for "300" AFP

SACHA Baron Cohen, best comedic performance for his role as "Borat" AP

JACK Nicholson, best villain in "The Departed" REUTERS

MIKE Myers, MTV Generation Awardee REUTERS

BRUCE Willis (left) chats with John Travolta backstage. AP

SARAH Silverman hosts the show. REUTERS

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

Shang Cineplex
1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
PREMIERE
OCEAN'S THIRTEEN

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2 OCCEN'S THIRTEEN
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 BORDERTOWN

Starmall EDSA-Shaw
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 SILIP
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
5 RESERVED

Metropolis Star Cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
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2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 OCCEN'S THIRTEEN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

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1 LUCKY YOU
2 SILIP
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

Pacific Mall Lucena Cinemagic
1 OCCEN'S THIRTEEN
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Filinvest Festival Cinema
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 BORDERTOWN
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
5 MEET THE ROBINSONS
6 OCCEN'S THIRTEEN
7 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
8 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
9 SILIP
10 SHREK THE THIRD

Blue Wave Marikina
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 (DOLBY) PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 (DOLBY) BORDERTOWN
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
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2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP
5 BORDERTOWN

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Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1
2
3
4

Masagana Cinema
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2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 SILIP

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
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2 MEET THE ROBINSON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
2 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP

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2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Eastwood Cinemas
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 MEET THE ROBINSON
2 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
3 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

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3 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
4

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2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
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2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

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3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

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2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
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2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

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2 PLEASE CALL

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(Alabang) tel 850.1276
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2 SHREK THE THIRD
3 PLEASE CALL
4 PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
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2 PLEASE CALL
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4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
5 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
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2 LUCKY YOU
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
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2 PLEASE CALL

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'Blood Diamond'

"BLOOD DIAMOND," AN epic that takes viewers on a journey through harsh but beautiful West Africa, is now available on a two-disc special edition wide screen format from Warner Home Video.

The film stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Djimon Hounsou and Jennifer Connelly.

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Edward Zwick, it tells of the human cost of the diamond trade in war-torn Sierra Leone.

and a social and political allegory, the movie was recently selected for the 2007 Cinequest Film Festival "New Visions" category.

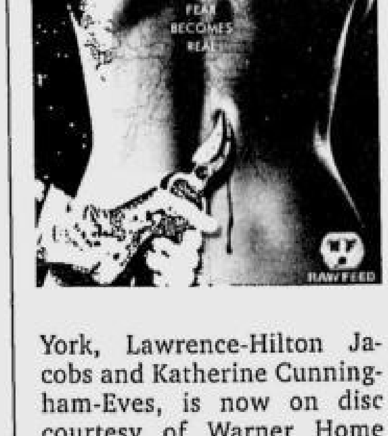
Directed by Tony Krantz from a screenplay by Erik Jendresen, the movie also features a DVD soundtrack with three songs from artist York.

NOW ON DISC

'Sublime'

"Sublime," starring Tom Cavanagh, Kathleen "Bird" York, Lawrence-Hilton Jacobs and Katherine Cunningham-Eves, is now on disc courtesy of Warner Home Video.

A modern-day horror tale

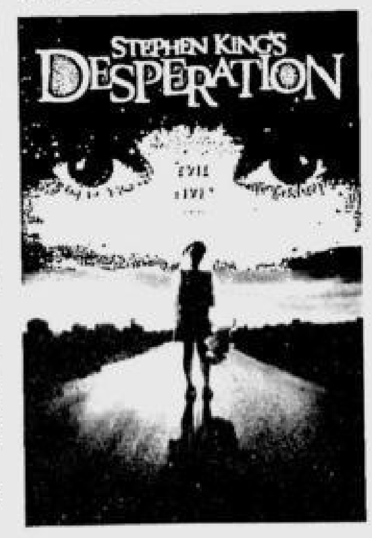


'Desperation'

Stephen King's "Desperation," which was translated into film by director Mick Garris, is now on video in DVD format.

In the thriller, King delivers another mix of fear, tension and suspense in a story about a group of strangers who become reluctant heroes while battling to bring down an unearthed evil.

Ron Perlman, Tom Skeritt, Steven Weber, Charles Durning, Annabeth Gish and Henry Thomas star.



The president is a tough but vulnerable lady

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

STAR WORLD HAS A NEW SHOW, "Commander in Chief," that gives a new spin to the "presidential drama" format firmed up by "The West Wing": This time, the US president is a woman (played by **Geena Davis**).

Telecast at 2 p.m. on Sundays, the drama series manages to hold its own when compared to "The West Wing," because it scrupulously avoids imitating the older series and strives to make it on its own.

Its story starts when the US president suddenly passes away, and his female vice president is thrust into the center of power with no time to catch her breath.

She plays it by ear, but is gutsy enough to keep her counsel and resist all sorts of pressure to nominate a well-placed vice president who isn't her personal choice.

Problems abound

That takes a lot of doing, because her own husband can't resist whispering the occasional word of counsel into her weary ear. The way he does it suggests that this could become a major problem for the presidential couple, and could even affect their marriage.

Other problems abound: Politically, **Donald Sutherland** plays an entrenched kingmaker who wants to make sure that the new US president *doesn't* succeed.

He floats a nominee's name so adroitly he makes it seem like the president has already decided in his favor.

But she still refuses to follow his lead, and insists that a former foe of hers, a general who is also a clever political player, becomes her vice president—despite his great reluctance to accept the "thankless" job.

Personally, the president also has many problems, since the members of her family refuse to subsume their petty agendas to her and the nation's more over-aching priorities.

For instance, her teenage daughter loses her tell-all dairy, and the FBI is afraid that, if it falls into the wrong hands, it could gravely embarrass the president. Thank goodness, the boil is lanced before it can become a major problem—but other worries and irritants soon take its place.

At the storm center of all of these problems and pressures is the president herself, and Geena Davis is charged with the major thespic obligation to make her character so well-rounded that she can convincingly and empathetically handle the wide range of concerns that accost her from day to stressful day.

It is a tribute to Davis' developed range as a performer that she's able to do this with a unique combination of authority and vulnerability.

The authority makes her truly "presidential," and the vulnerability saves the series from ending up as a turgid dramatized documentary of the US president's official and personal lives.

Trouble is, the series focuses so much on the president that most other characters fade into the background. We trust that, as the series unfolds, its focus won't be quite as rigorous, so that the full panoply of its oval office drama can truly unfold.

Is Hillary Clinton watching? Is Gloria Arroyo? Hmm, maybe *they* could teach Geena Davis a thing or two!

'N.B.'

Natasha Bedingfield's second album, "N.B.," features songs that sequentially explore varying stages of love.

With a No. 1 single in America, a No. 1 UK debut album, and over six million units sold worldwide, Bedingfield is the UK's biggest female pop star.

Her latest album features a stellar team of guest artists—Mike Elizondo, Adam Levine, Greg Kurstin, Andrew Frampton and longtime Madonna collaborator Pat Leonard. The first cut to be taken from "N.B." is the forthcoming single, "I Wanna Have Your Babies."

Katharine McPhee

"American Idol" runner-up Katharine McPhee recently released her much-anticipated debut album, which garnered rave reviews. The collection of pop, dance and R&B tunes features that hit carrier single "Over It." McPhee is set to follow it up with her second single, "Love Story."

"PIRATES of the Caribbean 3: At World's End"

Finally, an ending

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

IT'S STILL TOO LONG, BUT "PIRATES OF THE Caribbean 3: At World's End" finally ties up a number of loose ends, however forcibly at times, bringing an end to the complicated saga of Captain Jack Sparrow and his buccaneer cohorts.

The popular and profitable series of popcorn flicks hasn't always been smooth-sailing, as each of the blockbusters could have felt less cumbersome—and easier to comprehend—if unnecessary parts had been edited out.

The Gore Verbinski-directed "Pirates 3" picks up from the last sequel's cliffhanger ending, but its fun portions still get affected by its length.

Its main characters aren't particularly memorable for pathos or uniqueness, with the exception of Jack Sparrow, played by Johnny Depp. Sadly, appearing in a flimsily plotted franchise like this can water down even the most lovable of quirky weirdos.

Not so funny

This time around, Jack isn't as naturally funny, or as appealingly eccentric as he was in "Pirates" past. The time is fitting then to lay this character to rest already, even when he just got resurrected.

Not that the others didn't have anything to do. Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley) and Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) figure in one melee after another, busy improvising with quests upon quests, joining in treacherous alliances, and double-crossing would-be allies for one reason or another. Sometimes, the details get lost, and feel like fillers between the momentous plot points.

They have Captain Barbossa (overactingly—but enjoyably—played Geoffrey Rush) on their side this time, and an alliance with Singapore's top pirate Sao Feng (Chow Yun-Fat) could prove useful against the unexpected team-up between the tentacle-faced Davey Jones (Bill Nighy) and the forces led by Lord Cutler Beckett (Tom Hollander).

There's also a subplot that surfaces and sinks away concerning the imprisoned goddess Calypso, another enigma that wasn't effectively explained. But like the plot device that she is, Calypso contributes her might to the desperate band of seafarers' cause at the right moment.

Too long

The viewer sees what he's come to expect, although it takes a full two hours before a big, satisfying showdown takes place. We have the united Pirate Lords, including the newly crowned Elizabeth (who soon inherits the lordship and the pirate fleet from the plot device named Sao Feng) facing off against their opponents at last, after a head-spinning council meeting that displayed some "honor among thieves" code.

At least it is able to address the rarely brought up romance angle between Will and Elizabeth, who finally tie the knot stylishly in the flurry of kicks, sword-swings and exploding vessels. It doesn't make proper use as much of Jack Sparrow, alive and kicking again, but his rescue is also one of the movie's highlights.

The touching scene after the end credits is one of the few things the viewer would distinctly remember from this part. Apart from closure and a little drunken fun, there's little else to make the film worth remembering.

FEEDBACK

Social responsibility?

From Ed Balbalosa (ed.balbalosa@yahoo.ph) USSC, Suite 103 Centro Maximo, Jakosalem, Cebu City:

The use (yes, for all intents and purposes, the accurate word is "use") of scantily clad and gyrating women is now a staple on Philippine prime time television, just to bring in the viewers (read: advertising revenues). Day in, day out; during breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we *and* our children are bombarded with this *mindless* gyrating spectacle. I hope networks realize the kind of culture they are thus propagating. All they have to do is go around the communities representing their so-called market niche and ask the children, girls in particular, about movements they innocently accept as dance steps. So much for corporate social responsibility.

Just to clarify

From Duke Davis (dukke26@yahoo.com) 726 Market St., San Francisco, CA:

About Miss Nora Aunor marrying another woman in Las Vegas: The state of Nevada does not allow same-sex marriage—only Hawaii, Vermont, New Jersey and Massachusetts do, and some cities like San Francisco, New York and Miami.

gloriette GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls Lovemall

AT THE CINEMAS

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THX

G1 (GLORIETTA 1)	1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	2 OCEAN'S 13	3 SILIP	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
G4 (GLORIETTA 4)	1 MEET THE ROBINSONS	2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	3 THX OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 BORDERTOWN	5 SHREK 3	6 OCEAN'S 13	7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
GB1 (GREENBELT 1)	1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	2 OCEAN'S 13		
GB3 (GREENBELT 3)	1 THX PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BORDERTOWN GUARANTEED SEATS	5 OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC (ALABANG TOWN CENTER)	1 THX OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END		
	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS	4 BORDERTOWN	5 OCEAN'S 13	
ACC (AYALA CENTER CEBU)	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 28 WEEKS LATER	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
M2 (MARKET! MARKET!)	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 MEET THE ROBINSONS		
	3 BORDERTOWN	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	5 SILIP	

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A TEAM of stylists dolls up teen star Charee Pineda.

SUNSHINE applies mascara on her own.

On the set of the Kapuso network's new prime time drama

SNEAK PEEK

ALFRED, Iza and Mark Anthony smile for the camera.

Mission 'Impostora,' not impossible

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by August de la Cruz

TV SOAPS ARE IN A STATE OF FLUX.

While *fantaseryes* seem to have lost their luster, traditional drama shows have made a comeback in the form of *sineseryes* and *sinenobelas*—or remakes of 1970s and 1980s movies like "Bakekang" and "Bituing Walang Ningning."

Director Maryo J. de los Reyes observed: "With the success of 'Bakekang,' I think people are more partial to straight dramas now."

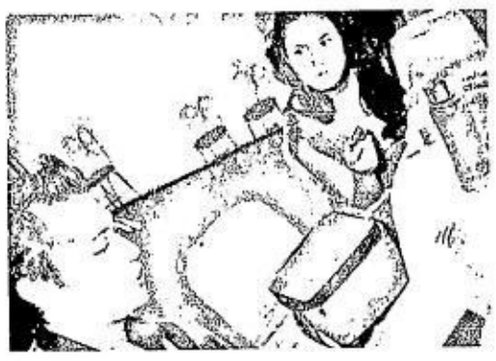
MARK Anthony checks out the photos on the laptop.

"SEEMS we're lucky together," says Iza, (right) of her tandem with Sunshine. PHOTO COURTESY OF GMA7

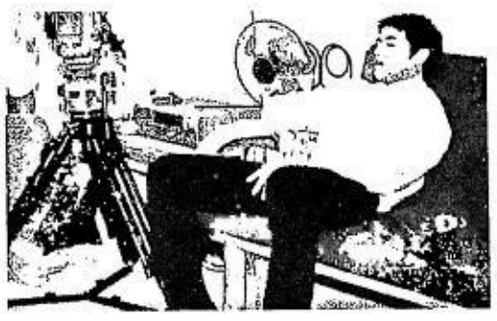
De los Reyes, who recently megged two traditional tearjerkers for ABS-CBN ("Mga Anghel na Walang Langit" and "Calla Lily"), is returning to the genre with GMA 7's new prime time soap opera "Impostora," which debuted on Monday.

"Although it's an original story by RJ Nuevas, this soap has a *komiks* touch," De los Reyes explained. "It's a lot like a Mexican *telenovela* with its twists and turns. There's deception and intrigue. It requires suspension of disbelief."

The soap tells the story of conjoined twins (played by Surf twins Charlotte and Charisse Hermosa as kids and by Iza Calzado and Sunshine Dizon as adults). As kids, they are separated, but a brutal crime results in facial disfigurement for one of the sisters. With the magic of plastic surgery, however, the other twin assumes a different persona (Sunshine Dizon).



BETWEEN shots, Sunshine texts away, above; Mark Anthony reads a book and Iza makes a quick call, above left; and Alfred catches a few Zs, above right.



Sounds incredible, a cross between "Kambal Tuko" and "Hiram na Mukha"?

Calzado admitted that the new soap "has fantastic elements. It stretches reality a bit, but it's not totally unbelievable."

Co-star Luis Alandy hoped that viewers would find the new soap "entertaining."

"That's our goal—to make an enjoyable series," De los Reyes concurred.

Leading man Alfred Vargas pointed out: "I expect it to be an endearing show in the mold of 'Bakekang,' which captured the hearts of many Pinoys."

On the first few days of taping, De los Reyes recounted that the stars were "on their toes."

"I've been very demanding. I want them to take acting seriously." All the stars have been working hard, De los Reyes noted—particularly, Mark Anthony Fernandez, Dizon's partner on the soap.

"He has matured. He has depth," the director said of Fernandez, whom he had last worked with in the teenaged flick "Kabilin-Bilinan ni Lola" in 1996. "He's very conscientious about his work. He calls me every so often to ask about his performance."

Another crucial factor is the Dizon-Calzado partnership, which was put to the test in past Kapuso shows "Kung Mawawala Ka" and "Encantadia."

"We've known each other since we were kids," Dizon recalled.

"We came out in a TV special together. At that time, I wasn't in show biz full-time yet," Calzado said. "As a co-star, Sunshine has been supportive and generous from the start."

"We work well together," Dizon asserted, dismissing rumors of on-set cat fights.

Not true, Calzado said of the intrigues. "Seems we're lucky as a team."

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6. Cut-off dates for the minor draw is on July 1, 2007 at 11:59pm. For the Grand Draw, cut-off will be on July 31, 2007 at 11:59pm.
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'Tiyanak' lead star no fan of scary movies

By Marinel R. Cruz

ACTRESS RICA PERALEJO, AN EXCLUSIVE talent of ABS-CBN, admits she had been skeptical of her co-stars in the Regal movie "Tiyanak," especially those coming from rival network GMA 7.

During the first shooting days, she claims she was consciously looking for bratty co-stars.

"In fairness, *wala talaga*. They were all nice," Rica tells members of the press in a gathering on Sunday.

Rica leads the cast of the Mark Reyes horror flick, which also features Mark Herras, Jennylyn Mercado, Ryan Yllana, Karel Marquez and JC de Vera—all GMA Artist Center contract stars.

"They are all very professional. I guess con-

'TIYANAK'/ G2

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OPENING TODAY

Ang Daan Patungong Kalimugtong

Stars Rhenuel Ordoño, Analyn Bangsi-il
Directed by Mes de Guzman

Two children of the Kankana-ey tribe traverse long, winding roads and steep and slippery mountain paths, to reach their school, 15 kilometers from their destitute barrio. This digital feature won a slew of awards here and abroad: Urian Best Director and Production Design; Golden Screen Best Digital Movie and Sound; and New Director Prize/Special Mention at the 54th San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain. The second place winner in the local digital competition of the Cinemanila film fest two years ago, it was also shown at the 7th AsiaticaFilmMediale in Rome, Italy. Exclusively at IndieSine Robinsons Galleria.

Silip

Stars Diana Zubiri, Polo Ravales, Francine Prieto
Directed by Joel Lamangan

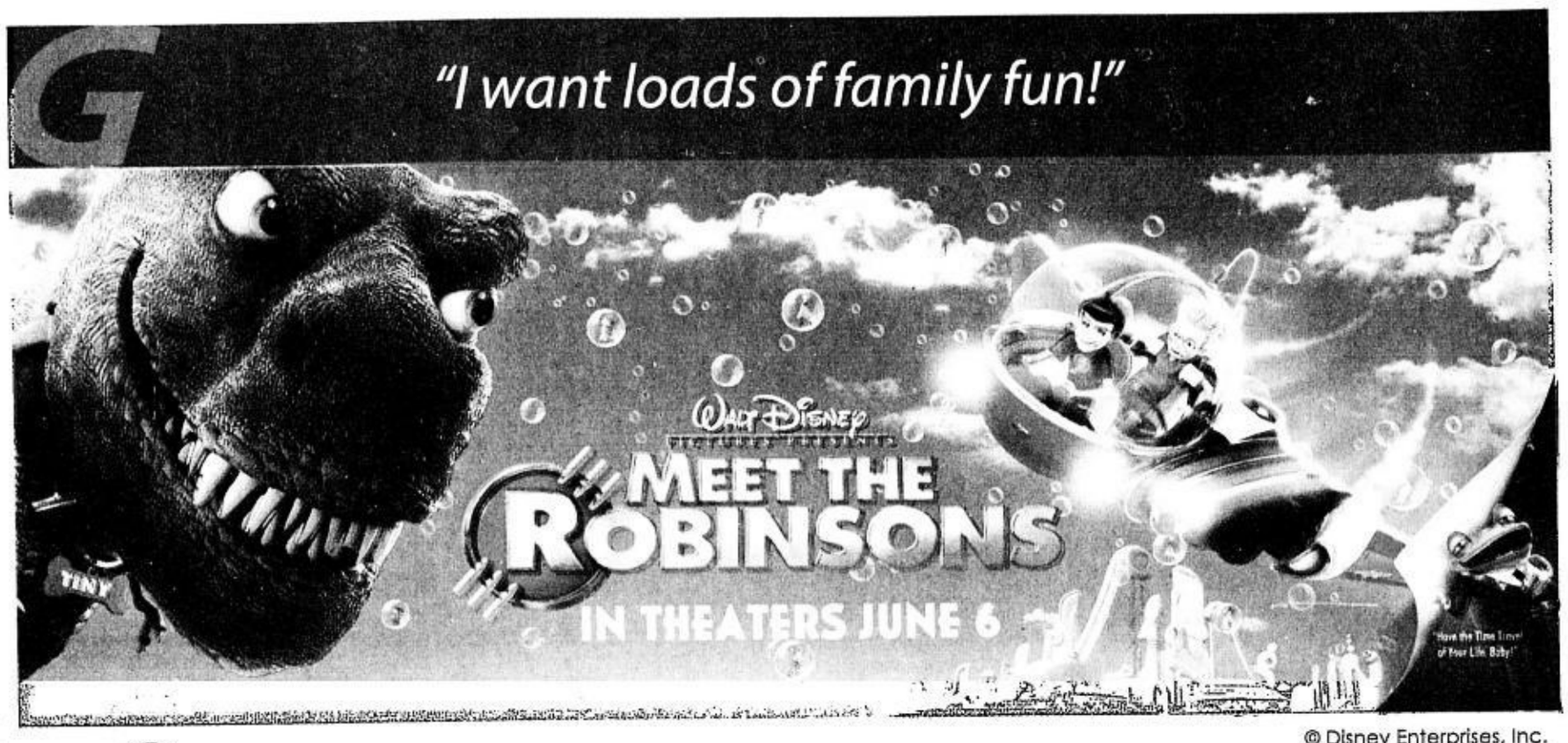
A woman (Zubiri) is brought by her husband (Ravales) to an isolated village. When a beautiful stranger (Prieto) joins them in their home, the wife's loneliness and jealousy push her over the edge. Seiko Films producer Robbie Tan says that he has long wanted to do a movie "similar to the Chinese film Ju Dou.'" Based on an "an intriguing true-life story," this "psychological drama" is "the fourth in a series of seven movies that delves into a woman's psyche." Lamangan relates. "It follows 'Warat,' 'Hubog' and 'Sidhi.'" Scripted by Raquel Villavicencio, this "earthy, sensual film" was shot entirely in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, Tan recounts.

Ocean's Thirteen

Stars George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Andy Garcia, Al Pacino, Elliot Gould
Directed by Steven Soderbergh

In its third outing, Ocean's gang stages a heist in the name of friendship. A Vegas hotshot (Gould) is driven to a heart attack after a greedy mogul (Pacino) takes over his beloved hotel. It's now up to the boys to redeem their ailing pal. Screened out of competition at the Cannes, this "spirited and engaging" romp "recaptures much of the spirit of the original," according to Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter. Todd McCarthy of Variety concurs: "As smooth as a good mojito, as stylish as an Armani suit and as meaningful ... as yesterday's Vegas betting odds." Richard Corliss of Time disagrees: "This time, it's mechanical ... [it's] so listless and logy."

OPENING/ G2



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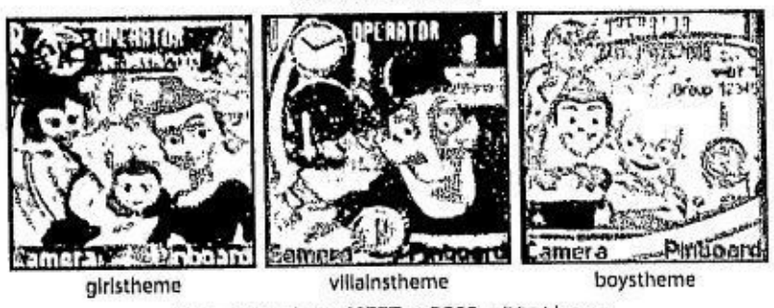

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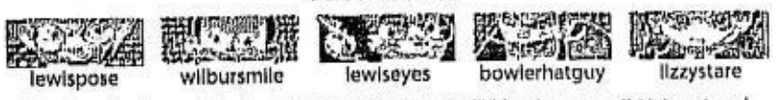

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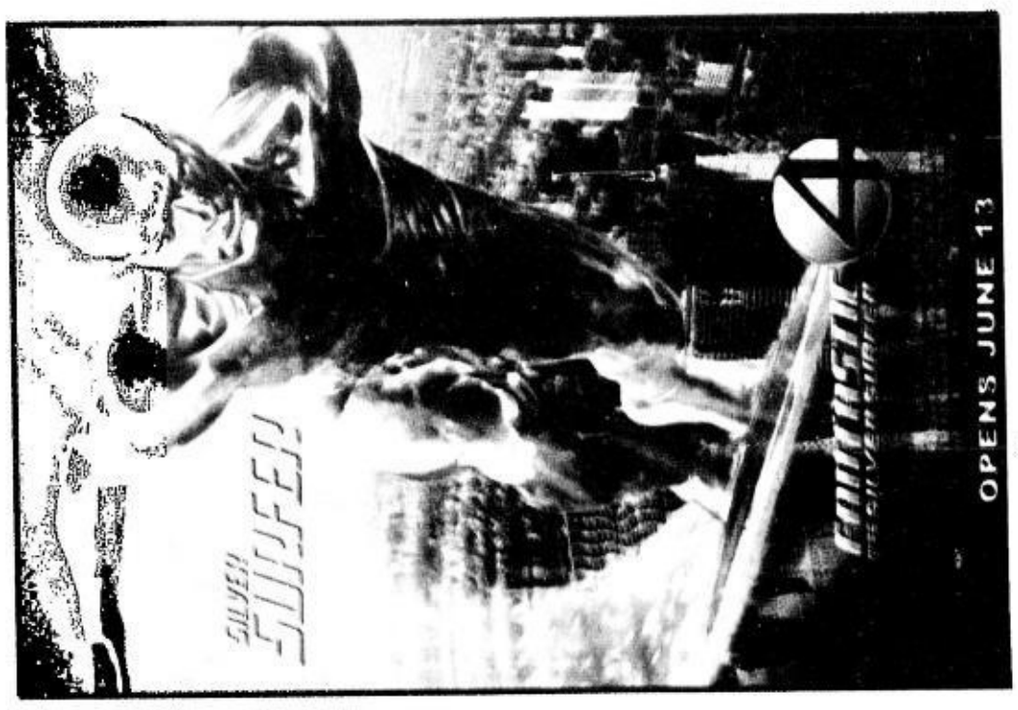

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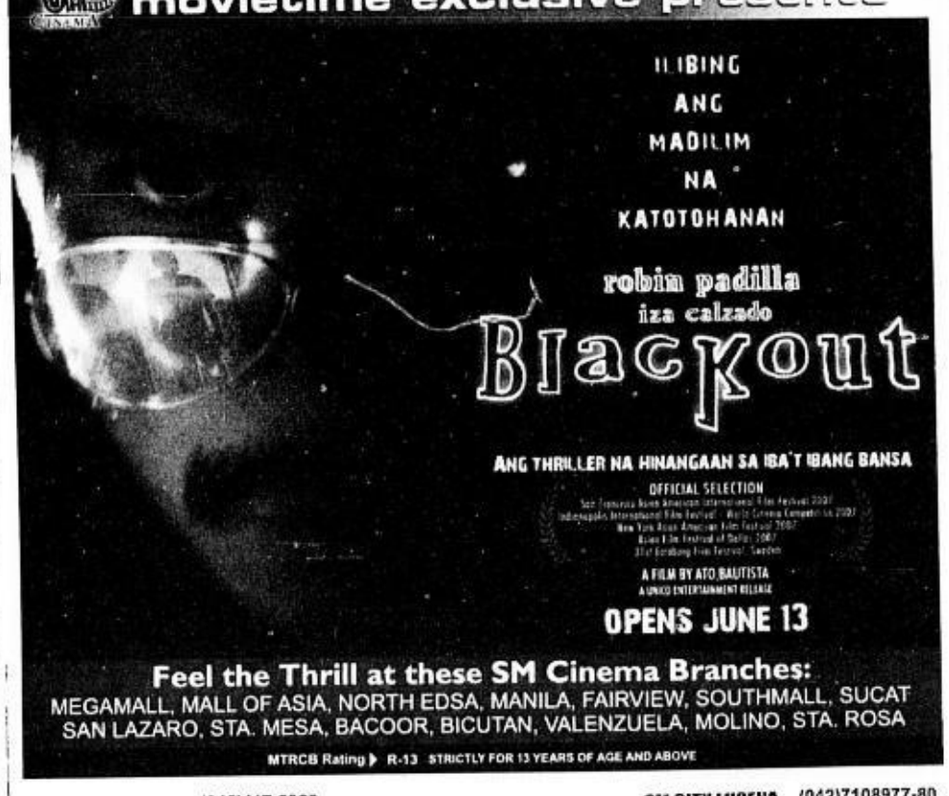

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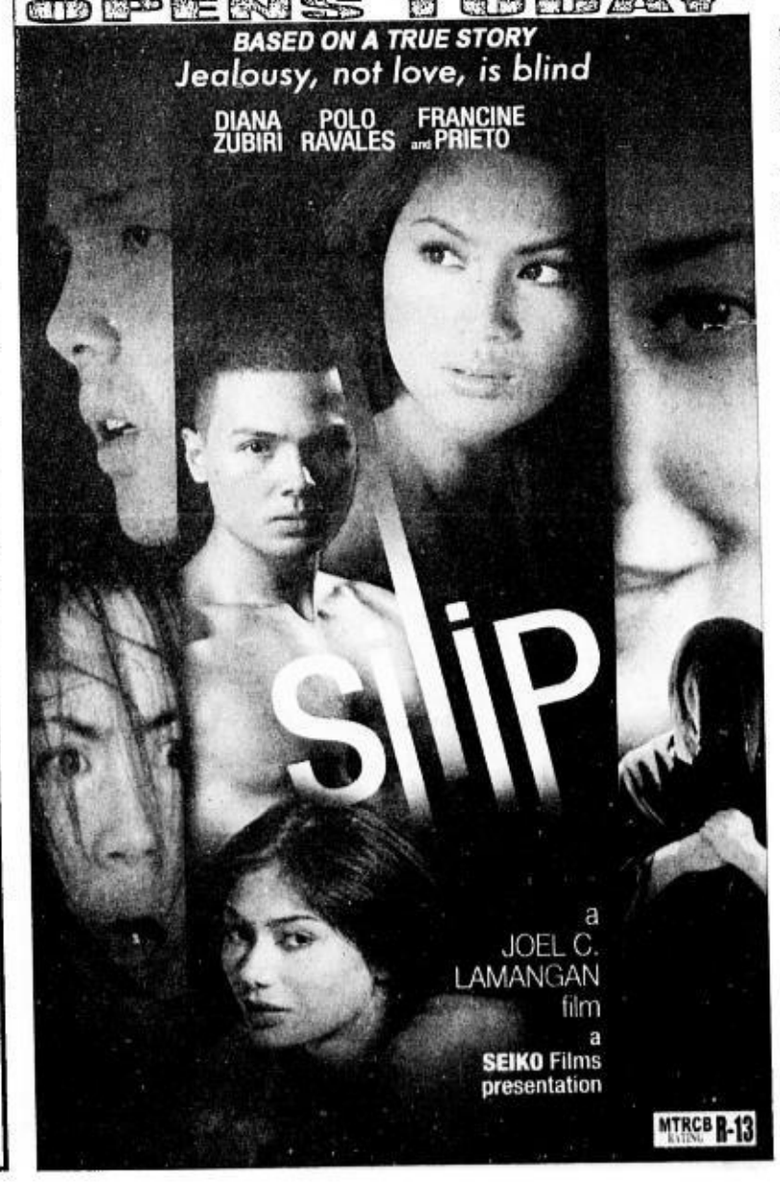

OPENING TODAY

From page G1

Meet the Robinsons

With the voices of Angela Bassett, Tom Selleck, Adam West, Laurie Metcalf

Directed by Stephen Anderson

Based on the book "A Day With Wilbur Robinson" by William Joyce, this animated flick tells the story of a "weird orphan" who travels to the future, in search of his biological mom. Instead, he is taken in by a family of inventors. Ella Taylor of LA Weekly comments that it boasts "computer-generated ingenuity and strong story line." Michael Wilmington of Chicago Tribune calls it "a goofy, gadget-packed science-fiction comedy ... a real technical breakthrough." Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly complains that "there's a frantic ... attention-shattering disorder [in this movie]. It's one bumpy ride."

Bordertown

Stars Jennifer Lopez, Antonio Banderas, Kate del Castillo, John Norman

Directed by Gregory Nava

Inspired by real unsolved crimes against women in a seedy Mexican town near Texas, this gritty drama thrusts a female reporter (Lopez) in the middle of an explosive murder investigation. This movie was reportedly greeted with "scattered boos" at this year's Berlin film fest. Cinematical.com points out that the "story definitely has [a] standard and predictable Hollywood spin." Vince Leo of Qwipster.net agrees: "A clichéd thriller ... it tends to undercut grim realities ... in the guise of entertainment." Leslie Felperin dismisses it as "only fair to poor." Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter rants: "[It's] replete with plot holes."

'Tiyanak' lead star ...

From page G1

tinuous work in soaps has become a plus factor for them. *Nahasa sila ng mabuti*," Rica points out.

Also included in the "Tiyanak" cast are Lotlot de Leon, Jill Yulo, Alwyn Uytingco, TJ Trinidad, Nash Aguas, Mika dela Cruz and Andrei Felix.

From among the Kapuso artists, Rica says she is most impressed with Ryan.

"He's a thinking comedian. He's very witty," she stresses. "Really, there's no such thing as bit roles for good artists."

Horror films

For an actress who has done six horror films—"Spirit of the Glass," "Takot Ka Ba Sa Dilim?", "Kutob," "Karma," "Malikmata" and now "Tiyanak"—Rica claims she is not a fan of scary movies.

"I get scared easily," she admits. "I scream inside the theater. That's why my friends are ashamed of me. But if I were to choose a favorite movie, it has to be 'The Sixth Sense.' I like its treatment. It has none of the screaming we always see in films of the same genre."

For Rica's co-star Mark, the 1990 slasher flick "The Night of the Living Dead" is tops. "I also like the first of the 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' series. It paved the way for the production of many more horror movies here," he shares.

Mark considers horror flicks more difficult to execute than drama or action. "Special effects is a major concern," he explains. "As for actors, it's very physical—you scream a lot, you run a lot."

According to Mark, the new "Tiyanak" is very different from the 1988 version of the same title, with Janice de Belen in the lead role.

"Although the original is scarier, this version is better in film quality and special effects," he explains.

"Tiyanak" is about newborn babies who transform into monsters capable of devouring humans. This version features the Tiyanak in three forms—those that thrive on land, water and air.

Special effects

Explains visual effects creator Jay Santiago of Riot: "The land Tiyanak looks like wood, the water Tiyanak is slimy and has seaweed-looking hair and the air Tiyanak has wings for its arms."

Riot is the special effects team behind TV shows "Captain Barbell," "Encantadia," "Etheria" and the movie version of "Mulawin."

Santiago says this is the first scary movie to use creatures that are more "detailed" and "flexible" because they are "in 3D."

"This is in its sense groundbreaking because we normally use puppets for our creatures," Santiago explains. "Freaky *talaga ang hitsura*."

"Tiyanak" was written by Fairlane Raymundo and Benjie Vellena, with production design by Eric Toralba and cinematography by Tim Jimenez. The creatures' creators are Noel Flores and Adrian Batoctoy. It will premiere in local theaters in July.

The games . . .

From page G4

junior basketball.

Chynna, a second year student of San Beda College, is making waves in the field of junior tennis.

Javi, of Xavier School in San Juan, is a junior karting champ.

"I don't think the kids consider hosting the show as work. They are actually having fun," Mamawal asserted.

The program is divided into several segments.

There is "Rampage," which talks about what an athlete wears on and off court. "Chomp Champ" discusses what an athlete eats if he wants to be a junior champ.

"For an episode, we interviewed a sports nutritionist about the proper diet. We will also feature 'athlete-friendly' restaurants like Cima. We explained why certain foods are unhealthy for athletes," Mamawal shared.

"We will show the latest tennis racket and explain how it's different from the rest," she said of "Sports Gear," which is about the latest equipment athletes use. "We will also talk about the newest triathlon uniform that dries up really fast."

"Junior Sportsfest" reports on what's happening in various tournaments while "The Coach" is on known star makers in sports.

"A first on this segment is an interview with San Beda College's junior basketball coach (Edmund) 'Ato' Badolato," Mamawal said. "For him, basketball is a mind game."

"Idol" is a feature on sports legends like Paeng Nepomuceno, Efren "Bata" Reyes and Manny Pacquiao.

"Training Ground" is about junior athletes who excel in their sports like 12-year-old international chess master Wesley So.

"Sports Kids" airs every Saturday, 10 to 10:30 a.m. on Studio 23.

'Sesame Street' live

"SESAME Street," which has won the Guinness World Records for the most number of Emmy Awards on television, is coming to the Philippines for the first time live.

"Sesame Street Live Presents Elmo's Coloring Book," a musical magical celebration of friendship, learning and fun, stars the world's best loved characters—Elmo, Big Bird, Cookie Monster, Ernie, Bert, Oscar, Grover, Count and many more. The gang will perform live on July 18 to 22 at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex.

Tickets are available at SM Ticketnet Outlets. Call 911-5555 or 374-9999.

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PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:00 / 3:20 / 6:40 / 10:00
MR BEAN'S HOLIDAY 1:50 / 3:50 / 5:50 / 7:50 / 9:50
PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50
SHREK 3 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00
OCEAN'S 13 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
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2 BORDERTOWN
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 1:20 / 4:40 / 8:00
4 SILIP 12:10 R3 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 12:15 R5 / 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35
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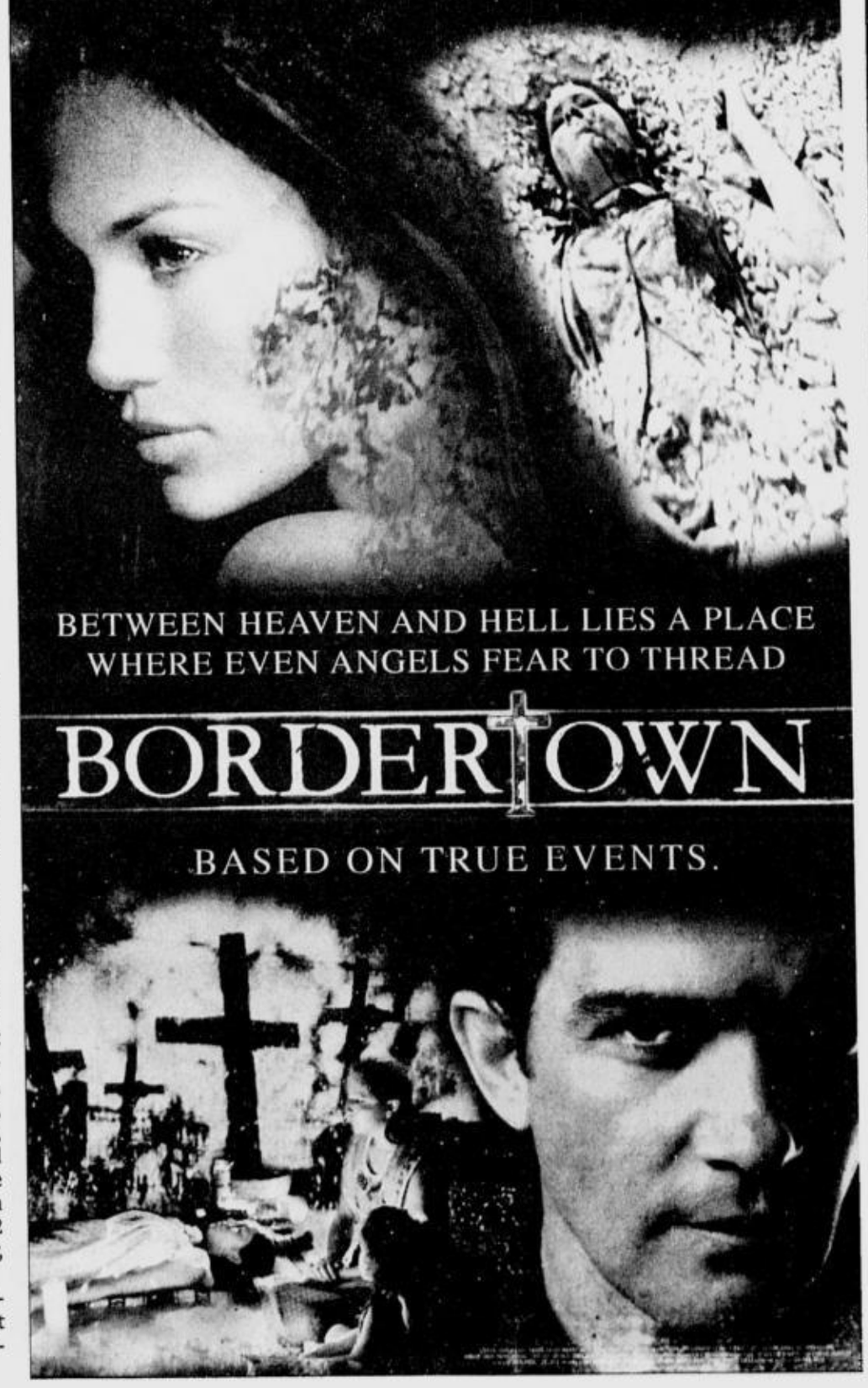

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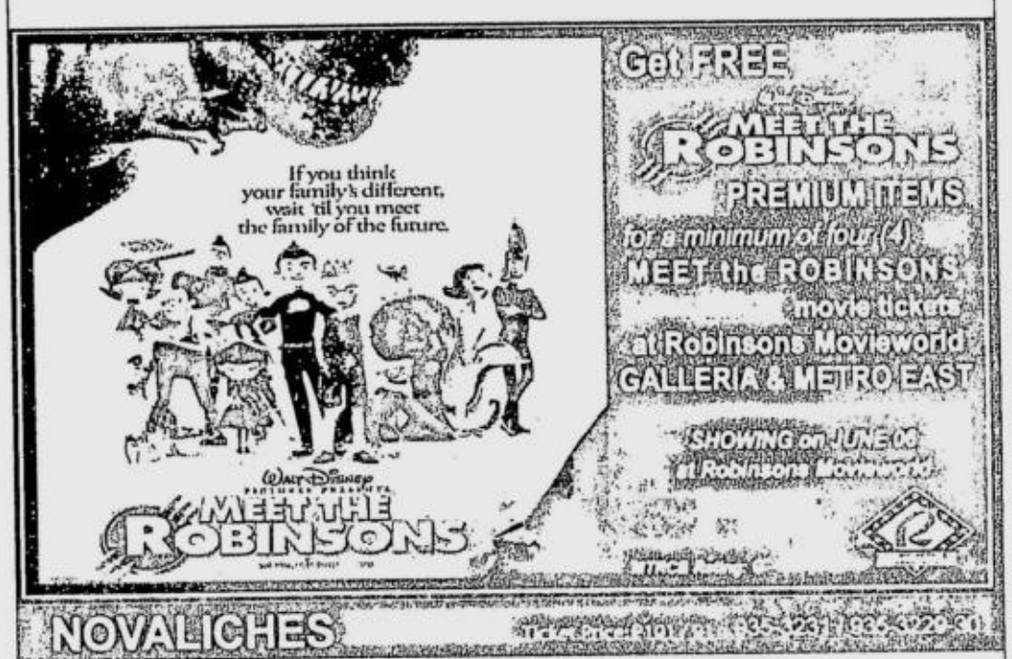
7 SHREK 3
8 SILIP



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3 OCEAN'S 13
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6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?

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STA. ROSA Ticket Price: P90 / P80 (049) 837-0907
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CLOCKWISE from top left, Javi Benitez, Katrice de los Reyes, Anton Asistio and Chynna Mamawal

The games children play

KID FIT

By Marinel R. Cruz

"WE HAVE A LOT OF things to consider when it comes to working with children. First on the list is abiding by the rules of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)," said Marie Mamawal, who has in her care four minors ages 12 to 14.

Mamawal, executive producer of "Sports Kids," is closely working with Javi Benitez, 12, Chynna Mamawal, 14, Anton Asistio, 12 and Katrice delos Reyes, 14—hosts of the weekly magazine show on Studio 23.

"According to the regulation imposed by the DOLE, we can only work with the kids for four hours a day," Mamawal told INQUIRER Entertainment. "We also have to secure work permits for them."

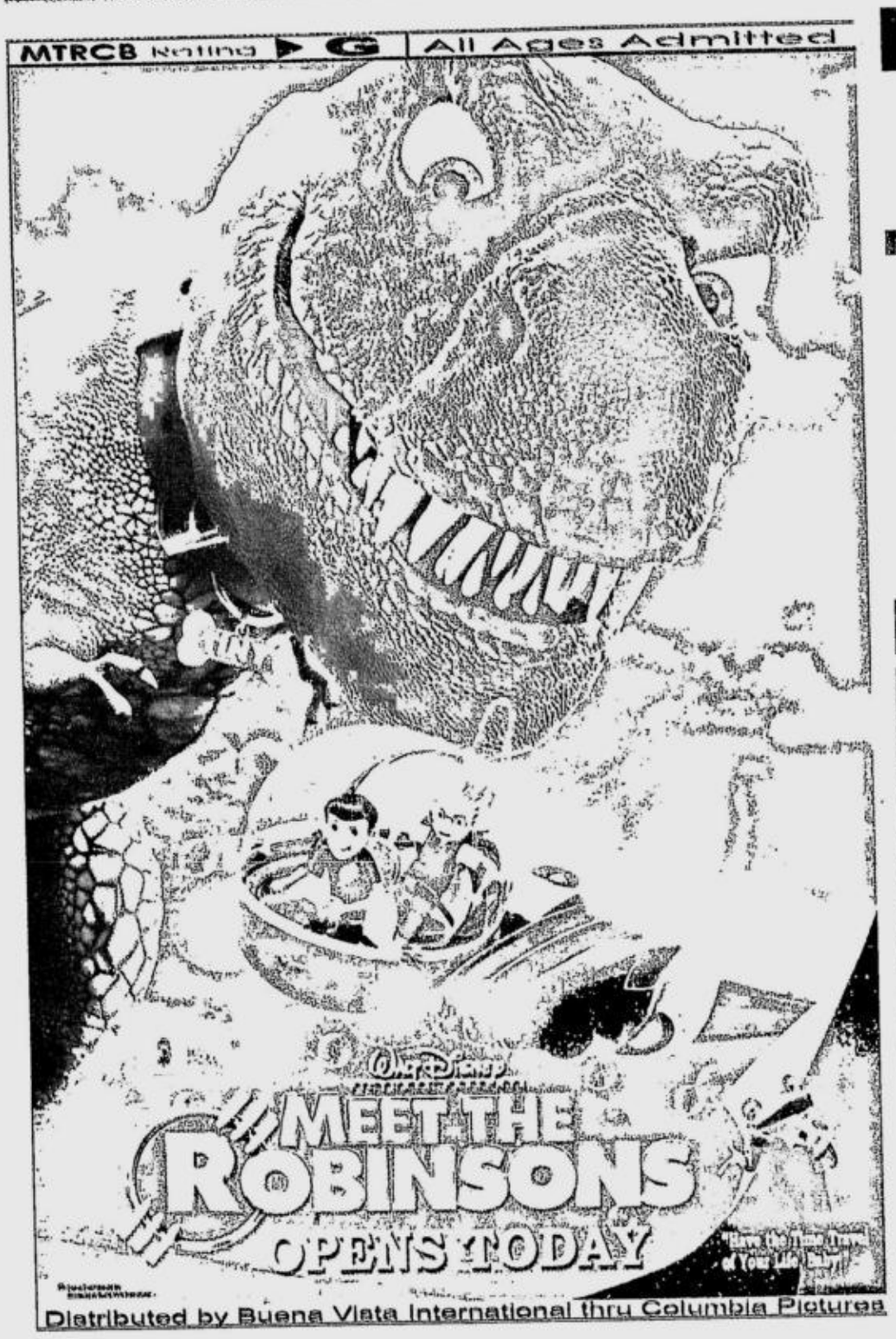
The DOLE directive prohibits children below 15 to work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., while kids 15, from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

"Since our hosts are also into sports, we have to consider the time they allot for schooling, training and competition. TV is actually the last on their list," Mamawal said.

Katrice, now studying at the Reedley International School, is a junior ice skating title holder.

Anton, who is from Ateneo de Manila, is a champ in

THE GAMES/ G3



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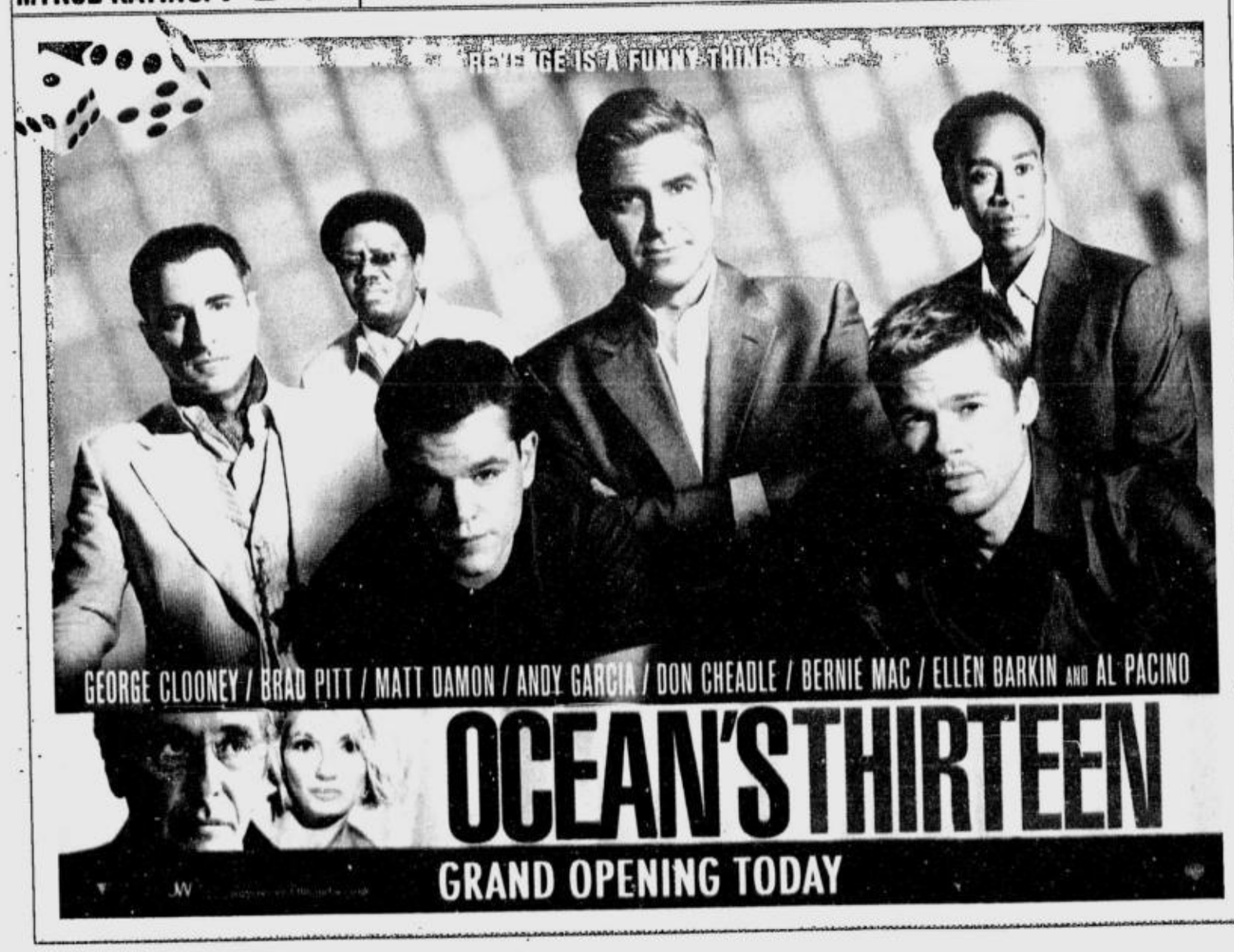
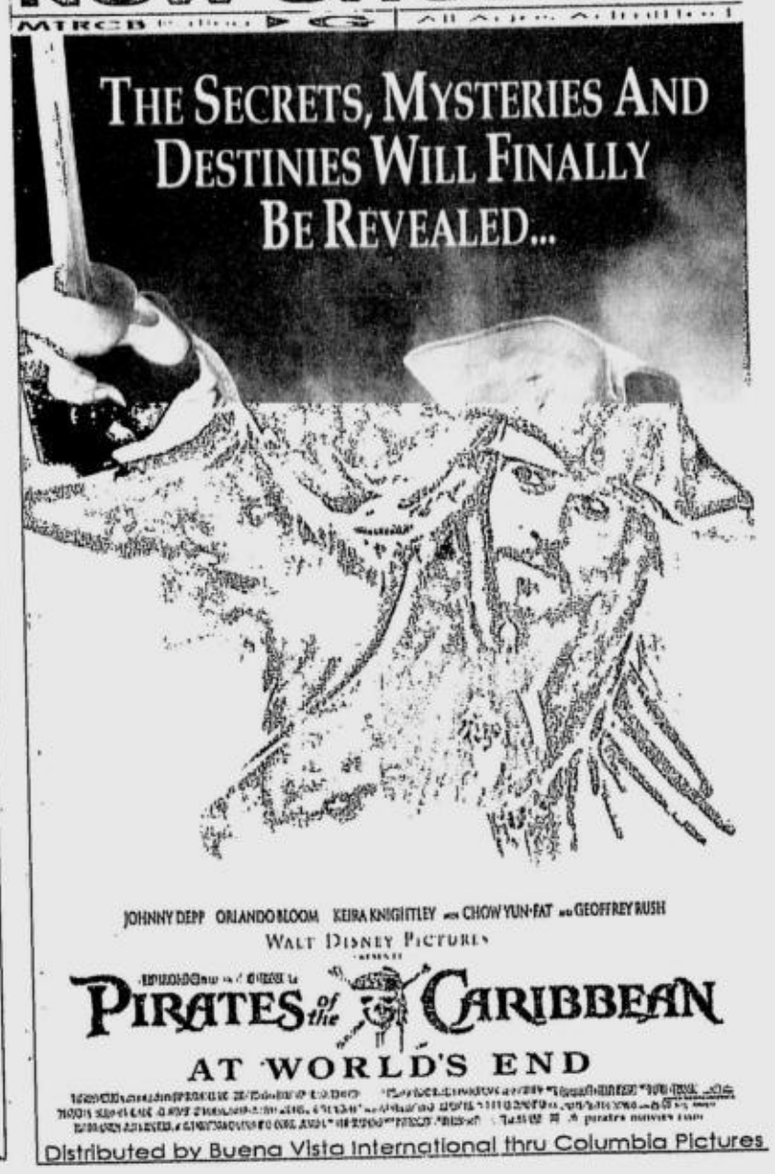


NOW SHOWING

MTRCB Rating ▶ G | All Ages Admitted



METRO / A17

Carol files kidnap raps vs husband Mark Jimenez

SPORTS / A24

Sharapova, Federer advance in French Open

WORLD / A20

Close aide of US Vice President Cheney gets 30 months in prison

NEWS / A2

Puno rallies Kampi behind JDV's bid for 5th term as Speaker

NEWS / A7

Losing Senate bet Chavit says he's retiring to take care of animals full time

CHR looks at Jonas' work for clues to disappearance

By Volt Contreras and Christine O. Avendaño

AFTER CRITICIZING THE MILITARY FOR BEING "uncooperative," the Commission on Human Rights wants to look into the work of missing activist Jonas Burgos, hoping that the knowledge could provide clues as to why he was abducted.

CHR/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, June 7, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 179 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

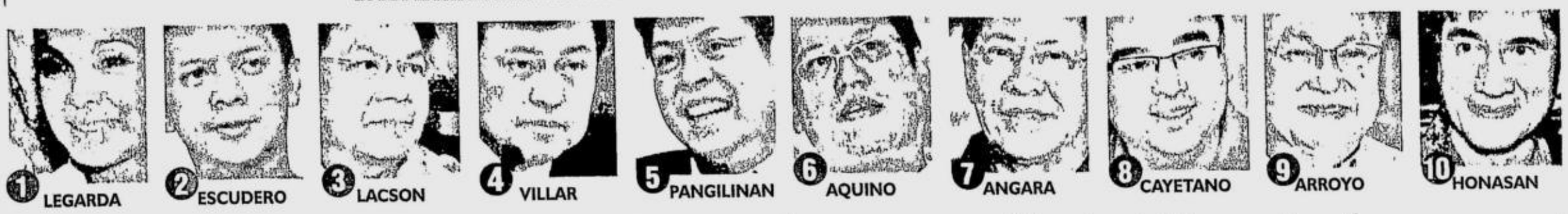
76 undocumented cocks held at Naia

By Tarra Quismundo

THEY MADE NO BOMB jokes, carried no bird flu and broke no immigration law as they cackled their way to Manila from California.

But the 76 live birds

76 COCKS/ A6



Finally, 10 senators proclaimed; new polls in Maguindanao set

By Jocelyn R. Uy, Jerome Aning and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY of the "Hello Garci" tapes and 23 days after the midterm elections of 2007, the wait was finally over for six Genuine Opposition (GO), two Team Unity (TU) and two independent senatorial candidates, but not for three candidates whose fate may be determined by the special elections in Maguindanao scheduled for June 20.

In simple but "very Pinoy" (an analyst described to ANC) rites at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City, the Commission on Elections last night proclaimed the 10 winners—Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero, Panfilo Lacson, Manny Villar, Francis Pangilinan, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, Edgardo Angara, Alan Peter Cayetano, Joker Arroyo and Gringo Honasan.

Ninth-placer Arroyo did not at-

FINALLY/ A6

SC to use its power to stop slays, abuses

Chief Justice vows to make rules to protect rights

By Philip C. Tubeza
Hong Kong Correspondent

HONG KONG—ALARMed by extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances of political activists in the Philippines, Chief Justice Reynato Puno yesterday vowed the Supreme Court would use its power under the Constitution to protect civil liberties.

"This is a new power given to the court under the 1987 Constitution. We don't know how broad the power is. We don't know its parameters, but we are studying how we can further protect human rights by the exercise of this

SC TO USE/ B4

GETTING TO KNOW YOU: President Arroyo and Mayor Ge Honglin of Chengdu, the booming capital of Sichuan, China's largest province, hold cordial talks before the start of the business forum where Ms Arroyo asks top businessmen in the city to invest in the Philippines. The President was accompanied by a high-powered Chinoy delegation led by Lucio Tan and George Ty. She is scheduled to arrive this afternoon. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Leftist labor bloc key in a Trillanes win

By Tony S. Bergonia and Fe Zamora

A LEFT-OF-CENTER ORGANIZATION of labor unions played a key role in the impressive showing of detained Navy officer Antonio Trillanes IV in the Senate race, documents furnished the INQUIRER said.

TRILLANES

The Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Pilipinas (KPMP) started to campaign for Trillanes of the Genuine Opposition (GO) in March, aside from publicly endorsing another GO candidate, Panfilo Lacson.

In a paper outlining the campaign methods it designed for Trillanes, the KPMP said one of the roles it was to play in making Trillanes win was to "consti-

LEFTIST/ A6

Bayan Muna leader snatched in S. Cotabato

By Jeoffrey Maitem and Jeffrey Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

KORONADAL CITY—IN YET ANother forced disappearance, the chair of the militant party-list group Bayan Muna in South Cotabato was reported abducted

BAYAN/ A4

GMA seeks RP-Sichuan logistics partnership

By Nikko Dizon

CHENGDU, CHINA (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, accompanied by a high-powered group of Chinese-Filipino tycoons, yesterday urged business leaders to make the Philippines a logistics partner of this booming capital of China's largest province of Sichuan.

"The Philippines is the perfect regional partner," Ms Arroyo said in a business forum following her arrival in Chengdu, China's "mega-central" city of Sichuan, on the third stop of a trip that earlier took her to Italy and Portugal.

"Third-country logistics services are important for China because it needs to source and import many of its raw material and intermediate input," Ms Arroyo told an audience that included Sichuan Gov. Jiang Jufeng, top city officials, potential Chinese investors and Chi-

GMA SEEKS/ A6

BAND OF BROTHERS
Amphibious assault exercise pulls together the expertise of American and Filipino Marines for one week starting last Tuesday. More than a thousand US servicemen are taking part in the exercises in Zamboanga and nearby Basilan. They are in Pilas Island, a known jump-off point of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf.

Paper trail points to cartel in DepEd textbooks deals

By Michael Lim Ubac

IS THERE A CARTEL OF PUBLISHING HOUSES that is bagging multimillion-peso contracts from the Department of Education in spite of the trash it is dishing out that has profoundly contributed to the woeful state of Philippine education?

Critics are raising this question as yet another batch of newly published textbooks for public elementary schools has been distributed for use this school year.

Antonio Calipjo Go, academic supervisor of the little known Marian School in the working class neighborhood at Novaliches, Quezon City, says the textbooks are replete with "major historical, technical, substantive grammatical errors and discrepancies."

The 53-year-old Go has become a sort of a Darth Vader in the local academic world, ridiculing works of supposedly MA and Ph.D. holders working for such printers as Vibal Publishing House Inc. and Watani Phanit.

He first burst into the scene in 2004 with his exposé on more than 400 errors in the textbooks he had reviewed.

Vibal and Watani Phanit were among those who secured contracts for the publication of 17.5 million textbooks and teaching manuals for public elementary and high schools that were intended to be used last school year under an P800-million loan from the World Bank.

Losing bidders charged that the bidding process was rigged and that there was questionable intervention of the World Bank to resolve issues that included conflict of interests of the major bidders and several of their "dummy" companies.

Contracts were eventually awarded to

PAPER/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Second FRONTPAGE

THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 2007

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Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
6 6 7 | 7 5 4
(All in exact order)
MEGALOTTO 6/45
8 10 12 18 41 45
P23,658,876.00

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/06/06/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Puno rallies Kampi behind JDV

By Christian V. Esguerra

SAYING HIS PARTY MEMBERS HAD AN "INstinctive love" for House Speaker Jose de Venecia, the chair of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino led Kampi's neophyte congressmen in a strong show of support for the incumbent speaker's bid for a record fifth term.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, the Kampi chair, hosted dinner for De Venecia last Tuesday even as other Kampi party leaders were challenging De Venecia for the House leadership.

But Puno assured his guest of honor that 90 percent of Kampi representatives were already committed to support him.

"About seven percent are out of the country so that will leave only about three percent [of Kampi congressmen] who have not thrown their support yet," he said in a joint press conference with De Venecia after the dinner at a Quezon City restaurant.

Puno described as a "non-issue" the challenge from Cebu congressman-elect Pablo Garcia and three other lawmakers.

De Venecia said the enduring alliance between Kampi and his Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) ensured that no impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo would prosper.

But the support from Kampi did not come without a trade-off.

Puno said his party was seeking "very active participation" in the 14th Congress. He said senior Kampi members like Representatives Antonio Alvarez of Palawan and Rodolfo Antonino of Nueva Ecija should have "very important roles in the agenda of the Speaker."

Antonino and Alvarez joined De Venecia and Puno at the press conference.

Puno said Kampi was not making any demands on De Venecia but was "approaching [him] with options."

"We are submitting to him the qualifications of our congressmen and giving [him] the final decision on where he believes Kampi can be most helpful to him," he said.

De Venecia said a 14th Congress under his watch would give all lawmakers "a place under the sun so that the senior congressmen and even the newcomers will have a role to play in the management of the affairs" of the chamber.

He said he would meet with Lakas, Kampi and other parties represented in the next Congress to discuss a "power-sharing, burden-sharing and problem-solving coalition."

Kampi has 53 lawmakers, 28 of whom are newcomers. It also has 13 governors.

Lakas has at least 92 House members, about half of whom are either on their second or last term.

The House has 58 standing committees, led by the powerful appropriations committee.

"We will push for roles that [Kampi lawmakers] can play that will truly help the legislation in Congress," Puno said. *With a report from Kristine L. Alave*

Noli wins another round against Loren

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE SUPREME COURT, SITting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), has dismissed the second aspect of the election protest filed by incoming Sen. Loren Legarda against Vice President Noli de Castro in connection with the 2004 vice presidential election.

This paves the way for the eventual dismissal of the protest. This was according to lawyer Romulo Macalintal, counsel for De Castro, who said the PET threw out the second aspect of the protest after Legarda failed to pay about P3.9 million that will be used to recount the votes in Maguindanao, Cebu and Pampanga.

Macalintal said that Legarda withdrew 95 percent of the original 50 provinces she protested, with only three provinces remaining, where she claimed she was cheated.

Reached for comment, Legarda stressed that the entire protest was not junked since the first aspect of the protest involving the recount of votes in Lanao del Sur remains.

"We will await the Supreme Court's decision and respect it. The only reason the second aspect of the protest was junked is due to the P3 million not delivered," she said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Legarda, who topped the 2007 senatorial race, will start serving another term when a new Congress opens in July.

Both Macalintal and Legarda's counsel, Sixto Brillantes, acknowledged that the protest would be rendered moot by the PET once Legarda assumes her post as senator.

DESPITE BONGBONG'S CLAIM

Gov't case vs Tan weak, says lawyer

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT'S BID TO recover the alleged ill-gotten wealth of taipan Lucio C. Tan remains weak despite having enlisted the help of Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. as a witness.

This was the opinion of Tan's legal counsel who described the moves of the Presidential Commission of Good Government (PCGG) as delaying tactics meant to mask their lack of evidence.

"This case has been going on for over 20 years," lawyer Estelito Mendoza said in an interview. "They just want to dribble the ball. They have no strong witnesses."

Last Monday, a lawyer for Bongbong Marcos told the INQUIRER that her client was ready to testify before the Sandiganbayan that 60 percent of the Chinese-Filipino tycoon's assets actually belonged to the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Yesterday, Mendoza expressed surprise at the younger Marcos' move, saying that members of the Marcos family are themselves defendants in several forfeiture cases filed by the PCGG.

"Isn't it unusual to testify against one's own father?" he said. "We're intrigued."

Mendoza—one of the country's leading defense lawyers and solicitor general under Marcos—pointed out that the PCGG has portrayed former President Marcos in a severely negative light in all its cases.

"They have very severe accusations against Mr. Marcos, that he is a dictator, and that he amassed ill-gotten wealth," he said. "It's somewhat surprising if [Bongbong Marcos] would testify and support [PCGG's] allegations.

Being contested before the Sandiganbayan is a combined 60 percent of Tan's nine companies which the PCGG wants forfeited in favor of the state.

They are Fortune Tobacco Corp., Asia Brewery Inc., Allied Banking Corp., Foremost Farms, Himmel Industries Inc., Grandspan Development Corp., Silangan Holdings Inc., Dominium Realty and Construction Corp and Shareholdings Inc.

The PCGG claim is based mainly on an earlier declaration of former First Lady Imelda Marcos that her husband was the actual owner of 60 percent of companies held in trust by Tan, his family and business associates.

Mendoza said that PCGG has so far failed to capitalize on over 30 hearing dates that have been allotted for it to prove its case against the controversial businessman.

To date, not a single witness produced by PCGG has been able to conclusively prove that the shares of stock in Tan's firms were bought with government funds, he said.

GMA hints at revamp in Cabinet

LISBON, PORTUGAL (VIA PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo hinted there might be changes in her Cabinet following the midterm elections.

Asked when would the revamp happen, Ms Arroyo said: "If I'm ready, when I'm ready you will know."

The President spoke with reporters over breakfast on Tuesday before she ended her two-day trip here and left for China.

In Manila, however, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday denied that a Cabinet revamp was in the works.

"The fact is the President has not really discussed it with anybody, [she has] not even instructed me about anybody that might be replaced, so nothing," said Ermita, denying text messages that have circulated since last week.

Ermita said the President was not yet in the mood to fire or hire new confidantes or political lieutenants.

He said some members of the media may well be expecting a Cabinet reorganization because of the vacancies arising from the elections and resignations.

Philippine International Trading Corp. chair Roberto Pagdanganan resigned to run for governor of Bulacan but lost.

Rep. Joey Salceda, the presidential chief of staff, made a successful run for the governorship of Albay.

Omar Cruz's resignation as national treasurer takes effect on June 30.

The President said she was not yet ready to name a replacement for Salceda. She declined to answer when asked if Salceda's predecessor, Michael Defensor, would be re-appointed after the one-year ban on the appointment of losing candidates expires. Defensor failed in his bid for a Senate seat.

Neither was she in a hurry to name a new national treasurer.

"I don't think we're in a rush to look for somebody the business community will be excited about," she said. *Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac*

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Dr. Arturo M. de Castro is a specialist in the field of credit transactions, thus earning the monicker ***"foreclosure buster"***. He finished cum laude with a bachelor of laws degree from UP and obtained his masters and doctor of laws degree from the University of Michigan. He is also a professorial lecturer in commercial law in several law schools, including UP, Ateneo and Lyceum.

Atty. Jim V. Lopez is an expert and authority in the Asset Protection law and wrote the book, ***Judgment Proof: Philippine Asset Protection Law (2003)***. He is a three-time winner of the National Book Awards (Manila Critics Circle.). He graduated from the U.P. College of Law & took post-graduate law studies at Harvard Law School, University of California (Hastings), and the University of Southern California.

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Journalists claim victory in CA ruling

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS AGREED WITH A GROUP OF journalists that state regulations banning news reports critical of the government amounted to censorship, but dismissed their case due to a technicality.

In its May 30 ruling, the appellate court said the media practitioners should have questioned the orders of the National Telecommunications Commission before the Regional Trial Court, but agreed with their claim that the statements of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, former police chief Arturo Lomibao and former NTC chief Ronald Solis threatening punishment for their reports have a "chilling effect" on the press.

However, the court said "no prior restraint can be imposed on the exercise of free speech and of expression, and that the freedom to communicate one's views and discuss any matter of public concern should remain to be so without fear of punishment or liability unless there be a clear and present danger of a substantive evil."

But a media executive said the court's decision could still be considered a victory because it upheld that there should be no prior restraint on free speech.

"In principle, it's a victory in the sense that the court recognizes there shall be no prior restraint on press freedom," ABC-5 News Director Ed Lingao said.

The ruling came after a yearlong struggle by journalists to overturn orders issued by the NTC in the wake of an alleged coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo in February 2006.

Ms Arroyo declared a weeklong state of emergency last year that gave authorities powers to ban rallies, arrest people without warrants and crack down on inflammatory media.

She claimed that some segments of the media "recklessly magnified" the claims of the coup plotters. Police subsequently raided the Daily Tribune, a newspaper critical of Arroyo, and troops were deployed around the two largest TV networks.

Court lets Erap go to JV's wedding

NOT ONLY DID DETAINED EX-PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada get the court's permission to attend his son's wedding this Saturday, he can also party all night and sleep over at his San Juan residence.

The Sandiganbayan yesterday granted Estrada's request to be at the wedding of San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, after the police and public prosecutors in his P4-billion plunder case posed no objections.

Ejercito, Estrada's son by former actress Guia Gomez, will be marrying Ma. Hyacinth "Cindy" Lotuaco on June 9 at 6 p.m., at the John the Baptist Church on Pinaglabanan Street, San Juan.

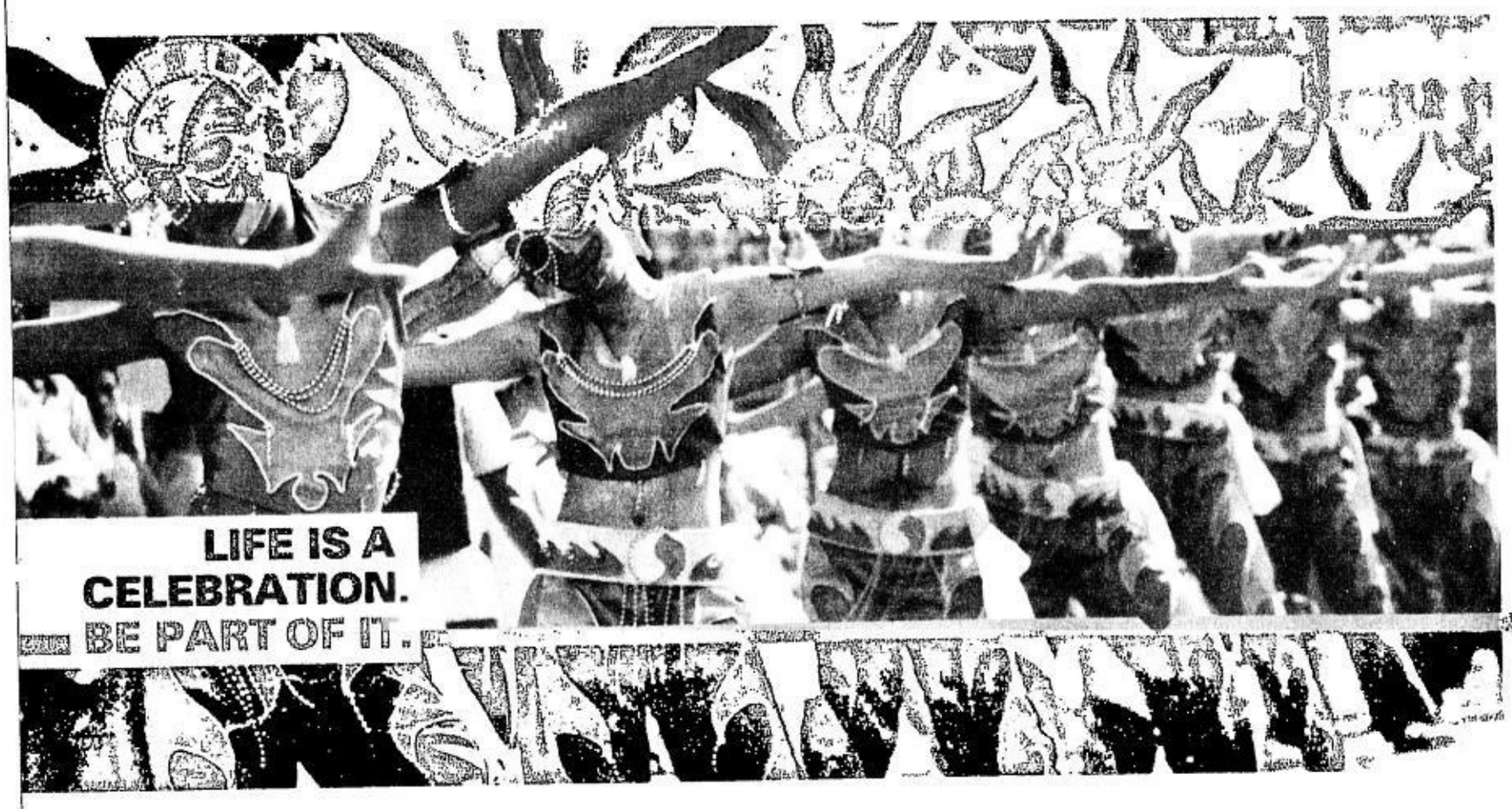
The court said the 70-year-old father of the groom can also proceed to the reception to be held at the NBC Tent, Fort Bonifacio Global City, in Taguig.

It was actually the Philippine National Police which "recommended" that Estrada be allowed to stay overnight in his residence on Polk Street, North Greenhills, "considering the reception may last very late at night," the court noted in its order.

Estrada should be on his way back to detention at this vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, by 8 a.m. the next day, it said.

Unless approved by the court, the media may not interview Estrada during this furlough, the order added.

The Sandiganbayan earlier rejected Estrada's request for the wedding to be held in Tanay.



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[Reference No.: PB070417-EL0060]

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)* through the *CY2007 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board*, intends to apply the sum of ***Php 7,500,000.00*** being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of New Battery Bank for SOCOMEC SICON UPS.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Battery Banks.* Delivery of the GOODS is required *within ninety (90) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders, starting June 7, 2007 to July 2, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of ***Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00).*** The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 15, 2007 at 2:00 P.M. at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 p.m. of July 3, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

FORM OF SECURITY	AMOUNT
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	Php 75,000.00
2. Bank Guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	Php 112,500.00
3. Surety Bond (2.5% of ABC)	Php 187,500.00
4. Foreign Government Guarantee (100% of ABC)	Php 7,500,000.00

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on July 3, 2007 / 2:00 p.m. at the *Admin Conference Rm. same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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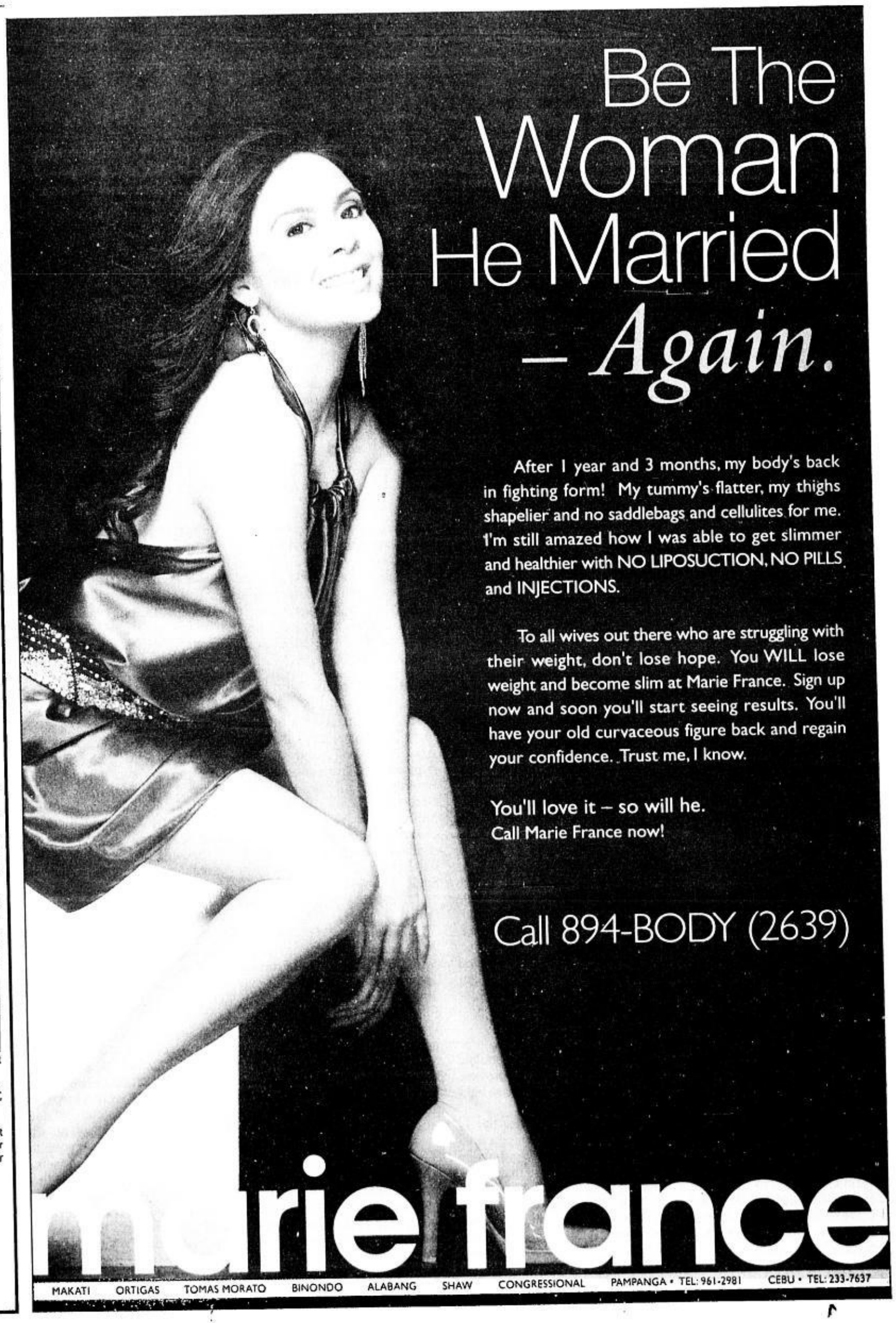
(PDI - June 7, 2007)



SC to use its power to stop slays, abuses

From page A1

power," Puno told human rights activists on the sidelines of the 12th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific in Hong Kong.

Puno served notice of the high tribunal's intention to play a more visible role in safeguarding liberties amid fresh reports of abductions of Filipino militants blamed by leftist groups on security forces fighting communist rebels.

"We are thinking of enacting more rules on how we can protect ... victims," Puno said. "Normally, these rules and regulations come from Congress (but) we're thinking of exercising the new power granted to the Supreme Court to make rules enhancing civil rights."

He said the high court had asked the Commission on Human Rights and some human rights groups for their inputs on the matter.

Puno made the remarks when he met with members of the Hong Kong Campaign for the Advancement of Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (HKCAHRPP) at the Renaissance Harbour View hotel. He talked with the group for around 20 minutes before proceeding to the international conference.

Justice by their own hands

Puno said the Supreme Court was concerned about cases of involuntary disappearances that have cropped up.

"We are concerned because that represents a violation of human rights. People will dispense justice by their own hands. That is a (violation) of the rule of law," he said.

According to the count by human rights group Karapatan, total extrajudicial killings since 2001, when President Macapagal-Arroyo took office, have hit 863 as of last May 15. The victims included church workers, farmers and youths.

The number of journalists killed since 2001 stands at 51.

Forced disappearances under the Arroyo administration, according to Karapatan, has reached 196 as of the middle of May.

'Passive receptacles'

Puno thanked Transparency International for its report lauding the Supreme Court for standing up against "executive encroachments on the judiciary" under the Arroyo administration.

"It's a matter of record. We are thankful for that," the Chief Justice said. "Dolly Espanol (author of the TI report) knows whereof she speaks. She's a former judge, (a retired) regional trial court judge in our country."

Puno said that while the judiciary had a "limited" role, the Supreme Court had tried to do its part in upholding human rights by setting up special tribunals to try cases involving extrajudicial killings.

"Courts are passive receptacles on this issue in the sense that we cannot act unless there is a case that's filed. In the meanwhile, I have conducted special seminars to train these judges assigned in these special courts to upgrade their skills in handling these cases," Puno said.

International experts

He said he had asked for help from the European Commission and international law groups which could lend legal experts to train Filipino judges on how to handle cases of extrajudicial killings, where usually there is only circumstantial evidence against the accused.

"It's a problem of proof and evidence. And with the reluctance of the victims to testify, or if there are no victims who are willing to testify, we have to rely on circumstantial evidence. That is the reason why prosecutors and the judges need this kind of training," Puno said.

He said the Supreme Court was arranging for another seminar so that international experts could give lectures on certain aspects of crime investigation.

"If evidence is based on circumstantial evidence, then you need to develop more in terms of quantity and quality of the evidence," he said.

Switching tactics

Cynthia Tellez of the Mission for Migrant Workers said that with the international condemnation and public awareness of extrajudicial killings, those perpetrating the murders might now be switching to abductions or involuntary disappearances to silence government critics.

"When they know that the extrajudicial killings are getting known to the public, they're resorting to disappearances. In that case, it's more difficult to prove in court. There's no body. No evidence," Tellez said.

Puno said the special courts could try cases of involuntary disappearances but their success would still depend on the strength of the cases filed by government prosecutors.

"Sometimes a case is filed but witnesses are lukewarm (or) the prosecutors bungle their job. A lot of things can happen. Even if a proper case is filed in court, we have to contend with all of these," Puno said.

Chinese calligraphy

"When we talk of the whole justice system, we are not only talking of the courts. We are talking of the police, the prosecutors (and) they are not under our control," he said.

HKCAHRPP members sought a meeting with Puno to thank him and the high court for its recent decisions upholding civil liberties and to ask about the human rights situation in the Philippines.

The group also presented Puno with a gift—Chinese calligraphy of the words "justice and peace."

"This is of no monetary value, just to put that on record," said Rey Asis of the Asian Students Association.

Part of the job

Puno said: "The Supreme Court has always been vigilant in protecting human rights so perhaps it is unnecessary to give me some kind of thanks. We're just doing our job."

Tellez said the HKCAHRPP appreciated "very much" the tribunal's recent decision junking the rebellion cases against six militant lawmakers.

"We know the situation of the judiciary is difficult," she said.

Besides Asis and Tellez, other HKCAHRPP members present were Jackie Hung of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Eman Villanueva of the United Filipinos in Hong Kong, Fr. Dwight de la Torre of the Philippine Independent Church-Hong Kong, and Ramon Bultron of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants. *With a report from Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

CHR looks ...

From page A1

Commissioner Dominador Calamba yesterday said he had asked for a meeting with Jonas' mother Edita Burgos, as well as his peers in a peasant organization that helps poor farmers.

Calamba said his initial theory was that Jonas might have been "suspected as an NPA (New People's Army member)" or a "front" for the communist armed group.

"That's why we really want to know what exactly he did. It can help provide reasons why he was abducted, or who wanted it," Calamba said.

At the time of his abduction on April 28, Jonas, son of the late press freedom icon Jose "Joe" Burgos, was a volunteer giving technical training to members of the Alyansang Magbubukid ng Bulacan, a local chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

Edita was scheduled to meet yesterday with Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. at his office in Camp Aguinaldo, but she was afflicted with vertigo (dizziness) and could not make it.

She sent her brother and lawyer to the meeting, which Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita arranged last week.

But upon their arrival, Edita's representatives were told that Esperon had expected them an hour earlier and had gone on to another meeting.

'Nothing happened'

According to AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, Esperon was to meet with Edita at 9 a.m. yesterday. Her representatives arrived an hour later, but Esperon had to go to another appointment at the Department of National Defense.

Edita's brother Jimmy Tronqued and lawyer Boyet Fernandez met instead with Col. Benedicto Jose, head of the AFP human rights office, and Col. Daniel Lucero, Esperon's senior executive assistant.

Still, Edita told the INQUIRER on the phone, "nothing happened" at the meeting because the two officials could not provide her brother and lawyer a copy of the AFP Provost Marshal report, which the family had been requesting since its completion last month.

The report is supposed to explain how the license plates of a vehicle impounded at an Army camp in Norzagaray, Bulacan, ended up on the getaway vehicle of Jonas' abductors.

Edita said she would have made it to the meeting if not for the vertigo that had kept her in bed for the past two days.

She said Lucero and Jose had suggested to her brother that she make another appointment with Esperon on June 12.

She has yet to decide on that, Edita said.

What has dampened her spirits was that the military officials could not give her family a copy of the "very important" AFP Provost Marshal report, Edita said.

"We are building a case. We'd like to find out what the truth is," she said in a phone patch interview with reporters.

On Tuesday, Isafp chief Maj. Gen. Delfin Bangit was a no-show for the second time at the CHR hearing. He sent a representative, Maj. Ser-me Ayuyao, head of Isafp legal affairs.

But Ayuyao annoyed the CHR, particularly its chair Purificacion Quisumbing, when he refused to take part in the hearing and questioned its legality.

Calamba yesterday said the CHR would again summon Bangit to its next hearing, the date of which has yet to be set.

With an AFP report

Bayan Muna leader snatched in South Cotabato

From page A1

yesterday by unidentified armed men.

Gilbert "Jing" Rey Cardeño was on his way home on a passenger motorcycle in Barangay Pangasinan near Crossing Barrio Dos at around 11 a.m. when he was taken at gunpoint, Zaynab Ampatuan, chair of Bayan Muna's allied party-list group Suara Bangsamoro, told the INQUIRER.

Cardeño, 27, is said to be the youngest member of Bayan Muna's national council.

Senior Supt. Roberto Kiunisala, the police chief of South Cotabato, confirmed the incident, saying Cardeño's abductors were riding in an unlicensed van.

"They blocked the motorcycle and took him away," Kiunisala said, quoting reports.

He said witnesses saw the abductors heading toward General Santos City.

According to reports reaching Camp Crame in Quezon City, police were questioning the driver of the motorcycle that Cardeño was riding on.

His abduction occurred 12 days ahead of the scheduled arrival of a team from the European Union that would help assess the Arroyo administration's needs in addressing the wave of killings and forced disappearances of leftist activists.

Since 2001, when President Macapagal-Arroyo took power, up to May 15 this year, 196 activists have "disappeared," according to records of the human rights group Karapatan.

Shadowed

Roy Gabriel Sande of Bayan Muna in General Santos said Cardeño was being shadowed by unidentified men days before he was abducted.

"Some men were monitored tailing him every time he went home. In fact, some men even took photos of our office in Koronadal," Sande said.

He raised the suspicion that state agents were behind Cardeño's disappearance.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo also said as much in a statement e-mailed yesterday to the INQUIRER: "The state security forces are the principal suspects in Jing's forced disappearance. The Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police have long considered Bayan Muna members as enemies of the state under the counterinsurgency 'Operation Plan Bantay Laya.'"

Ocampo called on state security forces to produce Cardeño.

He said it was "the climate of fear and the culture of impunity maintained" by the President and the military that "allowed" Cardeño's abduction.

Order from GMA

Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Virador, who worked closely with Cardeño during the party-list election campaign, demanded that the President order the military and police to produce victims of forced disappearances.

"Without such an explicit, publicly stated order, more activists will either be killed or abducted," Virador said.

Added Ocampo: "Extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances continue unabated because President Arroyo and the military keep themselves in a state of denial, and the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces persists in its arrogant defiance of the Commission on Human Rights' subpoenas."

The lawmaker was referring to Isafp chief Maj. Gen. Delfin Bangit's continuing failure to appear before a CHR inquiry into the forced disappearance of farmer-activist Jonas Burgos, who was taken from a Quezon City mall on April 28. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Faster rate

Renato Reyes, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), said the abduction of activists was now occurring at a faster rate than assassinations.

"After all that has been said, it seems the Arroyo regime remains incapable of stopping the abductions," he said. *With reports from Allan Nawal, Inquirer Mindanao, and Alcuin Papa in Manila*

Paper trail points to cartel in DepEd textbooks deals

From page A1

Vibal and Watana Phanit, among others, despite court injunctions sought by two bidders that felt they had been cheated.

A case is still pending in the Supreme Court although the Vibal group had already collected much of the amount after delivering the textbooks.

DepEd records show that from 1999 to 2004, the government spent P3.5 billion for the procurement of textbooks. Of this outlay, 75.96 percent or P2.65 billion went to Vibal Publishing and its sister companies, pointing to the existence of a near monopoly or cartel.

Key to arresting decline

The new textbooks and manuals—supposed to be updated every five years—are crucial to addressing the worsening textbooks' backlog in primary and secondary schools, and central to efforts in arresting the rapidly declining quality of education.

The INQUIRER uncovered an official paper trail, supported by testimonial evidence, pointing to the existence of a cartel at the DepEd which has been cornering the lion's share of the textbook contracts since the Estrada administration.

Rex Publishing is one of the two companies that protested the bidding, going up to the highest tribunal. Don Buhain, its general manager, admits that his company does not stand to benefit from the exercise.

"In the event that the Supreme Court decides to order the winning bidders to return the money, will they return it? The problem is we can't even sue. Where will you sue, who will you sue?" says Buhain.

Not sour-graping

In fact, the DepEd says it had distributed 11.9 million textbooks and teaching manuals worth P500 million for this school year for Social Studies in Filipino for Grades 1 to 5. This is part of the P800-million WB deal. The publication of the rest of the textbooks has been delayed because of court cases.

"At the very least, we will make it known," says Buhain, referring to the alleged rigged process. "They say we're sour-graping. To begin with, we are defending the position of the DepEd," Buhain says. "Rex will not get a single cent unless they bid it out again."

He says that the case, if resolved, could at least lead to better legislation and end collusion among bidders and government officials. "Was there abuse of some individuals?"

18 bidders

Of the 18 bidders that bought the bid documents for the project, only 11 submitted financial bids on Dec. 9, 2005.

Due to delays spawned by alleged irregularities, the period within which the Arroyo administration could draw from the World Bank loan actually expired in June 2006. But the government appealed, promising to end the contentious bidding process in due time.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus has cautiously distanced himself from the project. He says he was not party to the loan as he only assumed office in August last year.

"I have so much tasks on hand. We have some sort of systems breakdown for the last decade in the education sector, so I don't want to be distracted from my priorities," he says.

Combined loans

It was the DepEd that obtained the loan to finance the procurement of elementary and high school textbooks and teachers manuals in Sibika Grades 1-3, Heograpiya, Kasaysayan at Sibika Grades 4-6, and Araling Panlipunan Years 1-4.

The project was under the combined loans from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank designed to address the multifaceted programs of the DepEd.

Undersecretary Fe Hildalgo, then DepEd officer in charge, signed the papers, while former Undersecretary Mike Luz, in charge of finance and administration, coordinated with the Department of Budget Management.

Upon the DepEd's request, the Inter-Agency Bids and Awards Committee (IABAC) of the DBM called for an International Competitive Bidding on Oct. 27, 2005.

Process delayed

After the required prequalification, the opening of the financial bids was done on Dec. 9, 2005. The DBM and the previous DepEd leadership, for unexplained reasons, did not act in time to procure the books. Under the law, it has only 90 days from the date of the bidding to award the project to winning bidders.

The 11 of the 18 bidders who submitted financial bids were Vibal Publishing, Lex Media Digital Corp., Ibon Foundation, Grand C. Graphics Inc., Kolonwel Trading, Ningbo Binbin, Rex Bookstore, Anvil Publishing, Alkem Co, Watana Phanit and Daewoo International Corp.

Documents submitted to the IABAC showed joint venture agreements and common shareholders between several bidders: Vibal, LG & M Corp., JTW and Lamco; Watana and Advance Agro (and also with Alkem); Ibon, Bookman and Tri-Media; and Lex Media, SD Publications and FEP Printing.

Records of the Securities and Exchange Commission obtained by the INQUIRER bear this out.

Interlocking shares

The four suppliers—Vibal, LG & M, SD Publication and Watana—have interlocking and common controlling shareholders based on their General Information Sheets.

Informed earlier of the apparent misrepresentation of the four bidders, the IABAC, chaired by DBM's Eduardo Opida, instructed the Technical Working Group (TWG) to conduct a detailed documentary evaluation of all the bidders and to establish possible conflict of interests among them.

On Feb. 20, the joint DBM Procurement Service-DepEd TWG submitted a memorandum to the IABAC identifying the common shareholders of Vibal, SD and LG & M: Jean Fernandez, Aida Gutierrez, Stella Lawson, Nila Mampa and Gaspar Vibal.

Fernandez is corporate secretary while Mapa is vice president for all three bidders. Lawson is treasurer of both SD and Vibal.

Except for Fernandez, all four have 24.9 percent of subscribed shares in all three companies.

It is clear that the controlling shareholders of Vibal, SD and LG & M are common and the same, says the TWG memo.

It says that LG & M, a joint venture partner of Vibal, was the copyright-owner of the book submitted by Watana Phanit, a competitor. The latter was actually the agent/legal representative of LG & M.

Access to each other's bids

"These interlocking interests put the four firms in a position to have access to information about the bids, or influence each other's bids," says the memo. "Their acts created the appearance of a competition to establish bid prices that were artificial and noncompetitive."

The TWG then strongly recommended the disqualification of the Vibal group, prompting the IABAC to concur. It then wrote a letter to the World Bank.

One of the four lowest complying bidders, Kolonwel, was a casualty of the alleged fraudulent process.

To join the bidding, bidders must hurdle a stringent process of prequalification (content evaluation and testing of the thickness of the paper), submission and opening of bids, evaluation of bids and post-qualification (retesting of the thickness of the paper).

Kolonwel originally won Lot 3 (Hekasi for Grades 4-6) worth P386 million but was booted out of the bidding in the end. Kolonwel bagged the whole Lot 3 after passing the content evaluation conducted by the Instructional Materials Committee Secretariat of the DepEd.

The IABAC then decided that Kolonwel, along with Vibal, Watana and Daewoo, to be subjected to post-qualification, after winning the first round.

Post-test failure

But Kolonwel mysteriously failed in a post-test conducted on sample cover and body stocks of the textbooks by Instructional Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology.

The IABAC also disqualified Vibal and Watana for conflict of interest, thus only Daewoo, which won P128.8 million worth of textbooks, complied with all the requirements for this bidding.

However, the World Bank Senior Economist of the Human Development Sector Unit for East Asia and Pacific Region said in a letter to the DepEd on April 24, 2006, that Vibal and Watana Phanit should be allowed to bid.

No sanctions

It even urged the IABAC to reconsider its March 15 decision disqualifying the two for violating the Government Procurement Law and WB guidelines.

The IABAC subsequently gave in and quietly issued notice of awards to them.

The Marian School's Antonio Calipjo Go expresses alarm that Vibal had yet to rectify errors in its previous publications and it again is out with a new set of textbooks. No sanction has been previously imposed on the company.

As far as he knows, its error-filled textbooks remain in use.

In the end, the students are the losers.

HK maids not happy with $10 pay increase

By Blanche S. Rivera

HONG KONG—FOREIGN DOmestic helpers in Hong Kong yesterday received an HK$80 (US$10) wage hike, pegging their monthly minimum allowable wage (MAW) of foreign maids to HK$3,480.

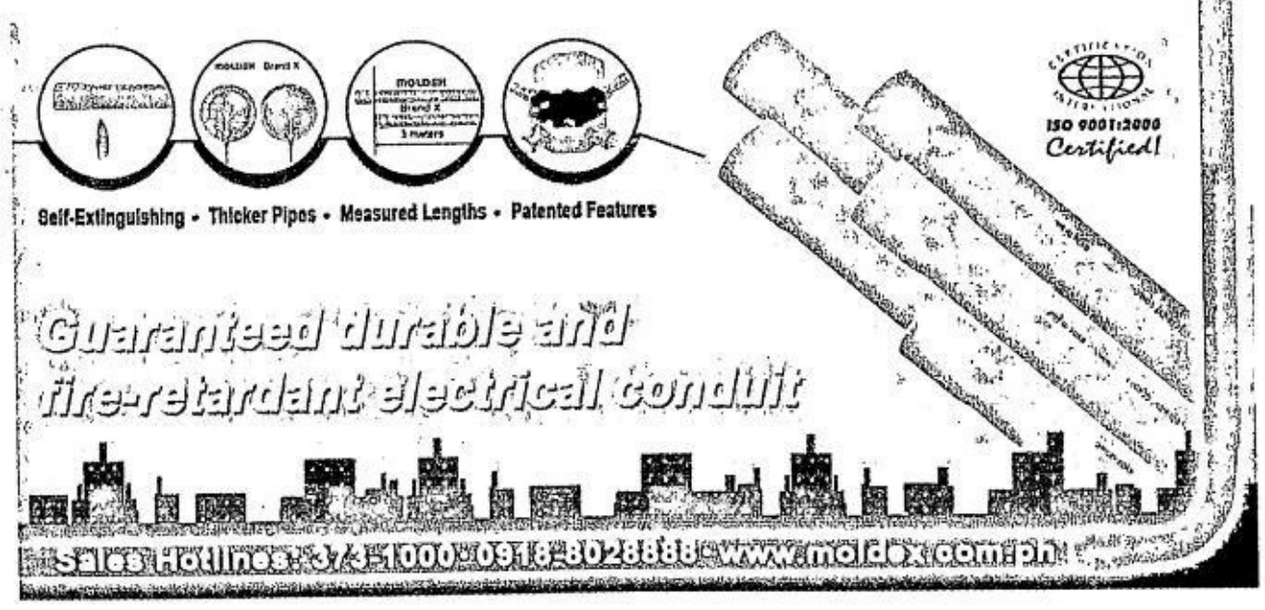
The Hong Kong Labour Department announced the wage increase late Tuesday afternoon during a meeting with the labor officials of major labor-sending countries here, including the Philippines.

"We have completed this year's review and decided that the MAW should be increased by HK$80 or 2.4 percent from the existing HK$3,400 per month. The new MAW will take effect on June 6," the Labour Department said in a fact sheet distributed to labor attachés of countries sending domestic workers to Hong Kong.

The Philippine Consulate General lists 120,788 Filipinos working as domestic helpers in Hong Kong as of December last year, the biggest bulk of all foreign maids here, followed by 104,129 Indonesians.

"It's a welcome move on our part, but whether it is commensurate or not is still questionable to the foreign domestic helpers," Philippine labor attaché Nida Romulo said in an interview.

Romulo said the labor attachés had asked Hong Kong Assistant Labour Commissioner Fong Ngai for the basis of the HK$80 wage hike, saying the domestic workers would likely question it.



No hospital holidays in 2 months

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THERE WILL BE NO "hospital holidays," at least for the next two months.

Hospital owners yesterday said they would cancel a scheduled series of "hospital holidays" to protest a new law that would stop them from detaining patients with unpaid bills after Health Secretary Francisco Duque III promised to consider their concerns in the writing of the law's implementing rules.

"We will wait for the implementing rules and regulations," said Edlane Ulama, executive secretary of the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines (PHAP) following a dialogue between doctors, hospital owners and Duque in Mandaluyong yesterday.

The PHAP earlier threatened to stage from June 22 to 23 a hospital holiday, a form of boycott during which member hospitals will not be accepting or servicing patients, except those in the emergency and intensive care unit.

Promissory notes

The Hospital Detention Law, or RA 9439, authored by Sen. Pia Cayetano, bans medical institutions from preventing patients with unpaid bills from leaving the hospital or refusing them medical certificates for as long as the patients issue promissory notes.

The law will not be fully implemented until the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) are completed.

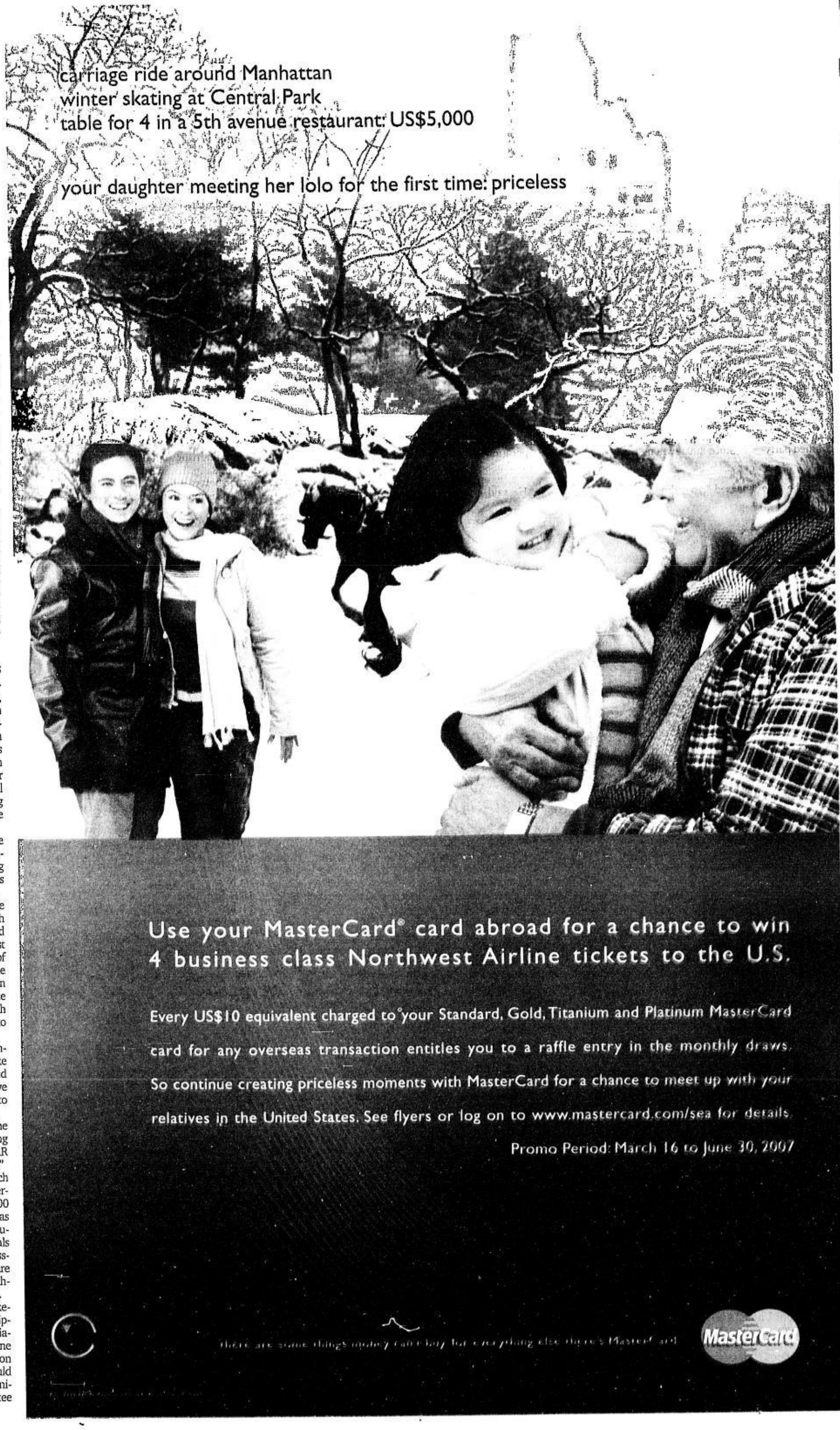
Some doctors at the Tuesday meeting with Duque jokingly said that the DOH could just delay the completion of the IRR to give the PHAP time to campaign for the repeal of the Cayetano law which purportedly aims to protect poor patients.

They said some incoming senators like Loren Legarda and Francis Escudero have already promised to back such a move.

Duque said the DOH would be coming out with the IRR "within 6 to 8 weeks."

The PHAP, which says it has a membership of more than 300 active hospitals, has opposed the law, arguing that hospitals could incur huge losses if poor patients are allowed to leave without paying their bills.

Duque said stakeholders like the Philippine Medical Association, the Philippine Hospitals Association and the PHAP would be heard in the technical working committee drafting the IRR.



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Finally, 10 senators proclaimed

From page A1

tend the ceremony.

The Comelec left hanging the fate of GO's Antonio Trillanes IV and Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III and TU's Miguel Zubiri—who were still locked in a fight for the last three slots of the Magic 12.

Hours earlier, the Comelec announced that special elections would be held in Maguindanao after it declared that the fraud-tainted polls in the province on May 14 had failed.

Maguindanao has 337,108 registered voters.

Irony of the day

Shortly after his proclamation, Senator-elect Cayetano noted the irony of the day.

"It is ironic that today is the second anniversary of the Garci tapes ... I don't know why we were proclaimed today," he said in a televised interview.

Cayetano was referring to the alleged wiretapped phone conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano dealing with rigging the 2004 presidential election to ensure Ms Arroyo's victory—an allegation denied by both the President and by Garcillano.

As of the latest tally, Pimentel was still in 12th place, leading Zubiri by 127,147 votes.

Still untabulated votes from Surigao del Norte, Basilan, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao—which have a combined total of 1.2 million registered voters—will be crucial in determining who will claim the 12th spot.

The 11th placer could be known by Friday, when the election body sitting as National Board of Canvassers shall have finished tabulating the vote tallies from Surigao del Norte, Basilan and Lanao del Sur.

As the proclamation ceremony opened with an invocation and the singing of the national anthem, the Comelec commissioners stood on a dais in black robes. The senators-elect stood in a semicircle in front of them.

Abalos read out the names of the winners, starting with Legarda, who received a spatter of applause.

"Now, therefore, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution ... the Commission on Elections, sitting en banc as the National Board of Canvassers, hereby proclaims the above named Senate candidates as the duly elected senators of the Republic of the Philippines ... to serve for a term of six years beginning on June 30, 2007," Abalos said.

Cory Aquino

The audience included former President Cory Aquino, who was dressed in yellow.

She was happy that her son won, but the former President said a lot of things still needed to be fixed in the electoral system.

She described the canvassing as "slow motion" and told reporters her friends from abroad had been calling her asking what was taking the proclamation of winners so long.

She thanked the people who kept vigil and sacrificed so that elections would be fair.

"I pray that there will come a time we will know within the day the results of the elections so there would be no fears of fraud," Aquino said.

Need for electoral reforms

Cayetano also spoke about the need for electoral reforms.

"Praise God and thank you to everyone for supporting and allowing me to overcome all the challenges. They will be my inspiration to correct what is wrong in our system," he told reporters.

Two Cayetanos ran in the Senate: he and Joselito Cayetano of the Kilusan ng Bagong Lipunan, who used the nickname Peter.

Alan had sought Joselito's disqualification and it is still pending in the Supreme Court.

"That is the purpose why I faced a lot of challenges, so I can give emphasis on the loopholes in our electoral law and how to strengthen our weak institutions," Cayetano said.

He said he won because he stood by his principles. "This elections were about people seeing character and principles," he said, adding that his clash with President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, also boosted his campaign.

"People got to know me because of that. Though many local officials did not support me because Malacañang had talked to them, I got the sympathy of our people," Cayetano said.

VIPs

Other dignitaries included Senators Franklin Drilon, Juan Ponce Enrile, Cayetano's sister Pia, GO campaign manager Sen. Sergio Osmeña III and Lily Monteverde.

Also present were TV talk show host Kris Aquino, sister of the newly elected senator and Sandra Cam, "jueteng" whistle-blower.

The lobby from the Gate 3 entrance of the PICC going to the proclamation hall teemed with Comelec employees, who took turns having pictures with the newly elected senators and other famous politicians.

Cayetano and Escudero got the most attention, until Kris Aquino and her husband James Yap entered.

A female employee was overheard saying: "I wanted to have pictures with Chiz, but he was with his wife!"

Policemen were seen posing for pictures with Lacson, a former national police chief. Employees were waiting for singer-actress Sharon Cuneta, but only her husband Pangilinan showed up.

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay also arrived with his daughter Abigail, a newly elected representative of the city.

Improbable

In ordering special elections, the Comelec said canvassers in Maguindanao could not produce the documents crucial to the retabulation of tallies in the province.

The recanvassing of tallies, believed to be based on ballots that teachers filled up under duress with the names of administration candidates, was ordered by the Comelec on May 30 when it ruled that it was "statistically improbable" for 19 senatorial candidates to get zero votes in the 22 towns of Maguindanao.

Should the candidate on the 12th slot fail to widen his lead even if votes from Basilan, Lanao del Sur and Surigao del Norte had been counted by Friday, the Comelec would have to wait for the results of the special elections in Maguindanao before it could proclaim the 12th winner.

Abalos announced the special elections after the special board of canvassers, which the poll body created to tally the certificates of canvass (CoC) at the municipal level, ended its work yesterday.

76 cocks held at Naia

From page A1

imported from the United States were "detained" at the cargo terminal of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) as they lacked the required original copies of their health certificates from the US Department of Agriculture, the airport quarantine chief said.

The partially "undocumented" cocks and hens were among a batch of 276 birds that arrived in Manila on Tuesday morning, all to be bred here as fighting cocks.

Dr. Simeon Amurao, officer in charge of the Naia Veterinary Quarantine Service, said customs officials at the airport decided to seize the birds upon finding out that the shipment lacked the original copy of their US health clearance.

No health risks

"All the 276 had permits and health certificates but the certificates of the 76 were just faxed copies so Customs decided to confiscate them while we await the original copy," Amurao said.

"But for us, they're OK because we've spoken with the veterinarian who inspected them in the US and we were informed that they were healthy," the doctor added.

Amurao said the imports would not pose any health risks to the public if released.

Several owners

It was not known yet whether the birds still had a chance of being released to the brokerage firm that arranged their shipment.

Amurao said the batch, which had one cock for every two hens, may have had several owners, although transported here through one broker.

Importing birds from American states was normal, he said. "We allow poultry from the US because there's no bird flu there," he said.

On the other hand, live poultry and poultry products from a number of Asian cities and Europe are not allowed into the Philippines.

GMA seeks RP-Sichuan logistics partnership

From page A1

nese-Filipino businessmen.

"The Philippines can help enhance the competitiveness of Chinese inland industries by doing procurement and preprocessing of low value-to-weight product components in the Philippines. The Philippines could provide logistics services to Chengdu in terms of forwarding networks and procedures, supply chain services and even local servicing," she said.

Ms Arroyo stressed that the Philippines was making a slow but sure victory in turning around the economy "to lift up its poor."

"We are investing in our people and creating new hope and opportunity to the people," she said.

The investments the Philippine government is making in its "human and physical infrastructure," as well as the country's strategic location, will also make the Sichuan companies "become more competitive if you do business in the Philippines," the President said.

Livestock feeds

Ms Arroyo pointed out how New Hope Group, one of China's largest distributors of feeds for the livestock industry that already has an $11-million feeds factory on MacArthur Highway, is building a $7 million factory in San Simon, Pampanga.

The company is also poised to put up three more factories in Isabela and still to be identified locations in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Chinese-Filipino businessmen, in turn, have begun investing in Chengdu as well.

The Henry Sy-owned ShoeMart has built its third retail mall in China in Chengdu worth $80 million. Ms Arroyo toured the mall after the business forum and banquet hosted by the Sichuan governor.

One of the Philippines' leading banks, MetroBank, is set to put up another branch in Chengdu, its third in China.

Oishi, the food manufacturing company, is also "contemplating" on setting up business in Chengdu, Ms Arroyo said.

Plea for Chinese investments

Lucio Tan and MetroBank's George Ty led the economic mission of the Chinese-Filipino tycoons, described by Ms Arroyo in her speech as a "high-powered business community."

"We look forward to the day when Sichuan substantially raises the level of investments in the Philippines ... By investing in one another, trading with one another, and visiting one another, we are showing that we have confidence in a shared future together," Ms Arroyo said.

Chengdu's mayor also invited the Philippines to set up a consular office in the city.

Ms Arroyo witnessed the signing of an agreement for friendly cooperation between Cebu province, represented by Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, and Sichuan Governor Jiang.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said the Philippines and Sichuan were also exploring possibilities for agribusiness, particularly in the import and export of tropical fruits from the Philippines and temperate fruits from Sichuan.

Yap added that the Philippine government was working on a technology tie-up with Sichuan, "called the land of abundance."

Sichuan has three state agriculture colleges which Yap hopes would tie up with the Philippines' agribusiness and agricultural schools and state colleges and universities.

From Chengdu, Ms Arroyo and her delegation flew to Chongqing where she is expected to attend today another trade and investment forum.

The President's visit in Chongqing highlights the Philippines' aggressive initiative to take part in the robust development of China's western region.

Meetings in Portugal

Before departing Lisbon on Tuesday, Ms Arroyo met with Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva and Prime Minister Jaime Gama to renew ties and discuss cooperation between the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Ms Arroyo invited Gama to visit the Philippines, while Silva asked her to return for an official visit. Ms Arroyo was primarily on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima to thank the Virgin Mary for the recovery of her husband from an open heart surgery.

Ms Arroyo, current Asean chair, told reporters that her meeting with the two Portuguese leaders was important because Portugal would chair the European Union in July.

"I hope during Portugal's presidency of EU, you will move forward your relations not only with Brazil but with Asean," she told Gama at the San Bento Palace.

Ms Arroyo expressed hope that under Portugal's leadership, the EU members would follow France in signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with Asean.

Free trade agreement

Ms Arroyo also said the free trade agreement between the Asean and the European Union might be signed in November during Portugal's leadership of the union.

Gama said it was important for the European Union to build strong relations with Asia.

"It's a great honor for us to welcome you. The Philippines has long historical ties with Portugal. Our relations are excellent," Silva said in a separate meeting at the Palacio de Belem.

"Your visit to Fatima was a very special moment," Silva said.

A lot in common

Ms Arroyo said there was not much trade between the two countries although they have a lot in common—the Catholic faith, the sea as a major trade route, tourism and the fact that 10 percent of the population works abroad.

Gama asked Ms Arroyo about the Muslim secessionist rebels. She said a four-year ceasefire might lead to the signing of a peace agreement. She added that many countries were helping push the peace process forward. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Leftist labor bloc key player in Trillanes surprise showing

From page A1

tute itself as part of a logistical infrastructure for regular distribution and posting of electoral materials at the factory and the barangay level in areas where there are KPMP affiliates (labor unions)."

The document identified these areas as Metro Manila, Iloilo City, Negros Occidental, General Santos City and Polomolok town in South Cotabato.

The KPMP said it had 100,000 members in these areas.

"These activities will be undertaken in coordination with, or separate and independent from, any campaign activities that KPMP affiliates will do in their respective areas in support of their local candidates," the document said.

Detained since July 2003 for leading the takeover by rebel soldiers of the posh Oakwood residences in Makati City that month, Trillanes stunned the nation for his phenomenal rise from a No. 15-16 rank in the pre-election surveys to No. 11.

Military vote

Analysts yesterday identified some of the reasons that propelled Trillanes into the winning circle in the count of the Commission on Elections.

These included his being an "underdog," "a symbol of a soldier who will stand up for the people," a reminder of the "young officer like Gregorio del Pilar," and a rallying figure of defiance against an oppressive leader.

Trillanes' consistent drawing power among all sectors of society also showed "there is a military vote that can be harnessed in response to a compelling issue that affects the entire society," retired Commodore Rex Robles said.

"Trillanes represents an idea. He stands for a certain type of soldier that appeals to the voters, the soldier who will fight corruption, who will stand up for the people," Robles said.

Robles was a member of the Feliciano Commission, a fact-finding body created by Malacañang to look into the circumstances surrounding the Oakwood mutiny.

Unforgettable scene

An unforgettable scene from that mutiny showed Trillanes calling for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, then Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In the document, the KPMP said its campaign would cover the last 42 days of the 90-day campaign period for senatorial candidates.

KPMP members are the National Federation of Labor Unions, Philippine Airlines Employees Association, National Labor Union, Association of Democratic Labor Organizations, Solidarity of Independent and Genuine Labor Organizations, Philippine Congress of Employees, Democratic Alliance of Labor Organizations-Visayas, Mount Matutum Workers Federation-Mindanao, and the Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan.

Bandwagon effect

"The objective of the campaign is to help push candidate Trillanes into the second half of the 12-slate winning circle creating a bandwagon effect in the last weeks of the campaign period," said the document.

To push Trillanes into the winning circle, several candidates that it identified as vulnerable have to be pushed out, it said.

The paper identified them as Vicente Sotto III, Joker Arroyo and Edgardo Angara—all candidates of the administration's Team Unity (TU).

Current rankings in the Comelec count show the campaign tactic was effective in the case of Sotto, who is No. 19, but didn't work in the case of Arroyo, No. 9, and Angara, No. 7.

Creative, negative strategy

"The creative strategy for this kind of campaign is to position candidate Trillanes as the only GO candidate with a 'clean and comprehensive platform,'" said the document.

Alongside this creative strategy, the document said, a "negative strategy ... is expected to create powerful associations of name recall if the name of Trillanes is juxtaposed with that of Pangilinan, Recto, Joker, Sotto and Angara."

"The trick is that if a voter considers them their favorite but can only pick four out of five names from the administration ticket (TU) then he or she would need some more names from the opposition slate," it said.

Wanted

"Making candidate Trillanes appear a good choice, or projecting him as a good second best choice, could put him in contention."

Part of this strategy was to produce posters that says "Wanted" on the top of a picture of Trillanes and "written below is TRILLANES FOR SENATOR."

Another poster, according to the document, would have these words: "Kabayan, Boboto Ka Pa Ba?" (Fellow Filipino, will you still vote?)

Under the heading *"Abante"* (Forward) is the name of Trillanes alone. Under the heading *"Atras"* (Retreat) were "Mr. Noted" across Francis Pangilinan's name; "Mr. Value-Added Tax," Recto; "Mr. Bad Ka," Arroyo; "Mr. Aso," (Lapdog), Sotto; and Mr. Trapo, Angara.

Real causes, names

"To generate voter's interest and commitment in a situation where the actual or physical presence of our candidate is not possible, there is a need to adopt innovative techniques and strategies to make the presence of our candidate 'virtually real' by identifying him with real causes, real faces, or names of more popular candidates whether from the opposition or the administration plus a good number of nice people actively doing the campaign for him," said the KPMP document, signed by KPMP secretary general Dave Diwa.

"In electoral campaigns, the medium is the message."

In his interviews with media, Trillanes has promised to work for Ms Arroyo's impeachment. He said Ms Arroyo's ouster would be a solution to the divisiveness that ails the country.

Poster boy of injustice

Trillanes' continued detention despite a grant of bail by a civilian court has turned him into a poster boy of "injustice," Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said.

"It's not just a protest vote against the Arroyo administration, but a protest against the system, especially the justice system," Biazon said.

He noted that many Filipinos, especially the poor, often languished in jail while awaiting the trial to begin. He said this was also happening to Trillanes and the other Magdalo officers, many of whom were only in their 20s when they joined the call for Ms Arroyo to resign four years ago.

Biazon said the votes cast for Trillanes also showed that people see injustice whether in a civilian court or in a court-martial. "It's the same. It's still justice delayed, justice denied," he said.

But Biazon said the "clamor for Trillanes" was strong, especially in depressed areas where most victims of injustice live.

"People who feel that their interests are being threatened by military adventurism reject Trillanes," he said.

In fact, Trillanes appeals to voters even in remote areas not accessible by Internet, his preferred mode of reaching out to the voters.

The results from Barangay Abdulah Buisan of Masiu town in Lanao del Sur even showed him second to Loren Legarda, an adopted Maranao princess. He was also way ahead of popular actors Cesar Montano and Richard Gomez.

Trillanes garnered more votes than big-spenders Prospero Pichay and Chavit Singson, both of the TU and who were free to stomp the countryside.

Recurring theme

Political analyst Antonio Gatmaitan said the image of a "rebel soldier" was a recurring theme in Philippine colonial history.

"There is a part of us that is antiestablishment. That's why rebel soldiers are never condemned," Gatmaitan said.

He said the image of a young military rebel, or a young officer who will fight to his death, like Gregorio del Pilar, has a special place in the Filipino psyche.

"It harks back to the Spanish colonial times. In that way, we are like the Irish," Gatmaitan said.

He also said that in general, "voters love revolutionaries or rebels, wherever they are."

Like Trillanes, Biazon and Robles are graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). Trillanes graduated in 1995 while Biazon and Robles made it in 1961 and 1965.

Trillanes was born on Aug. 6, 1971, just months before Gregorio Honasan, the charismatic leader of several attempts to oust President Corazon Aquino, graduated from the PMA.

Chavit quits politics

VIGAN CITY—HE IS DEFEATED AND OUT. After an unsuccessful bid to win a Senate seat, outgoing Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson said he is ending his political career.

"I am retiring from politics. *Mag alaga na lang ako ng mga hayop* (I will just take care of animals)," said Singson, who keeps a mini zoo at his sprawling Baluarte here.

But he said he would always be available for his province mates and others "if they need me."

Analyzing the defeat of the administration's Team Unity in the recent polls, Singson said the supposed "command vote" and party machine did not work because of the "feuding bets" of administration party in the local level.

He said there was the Lakas-Kampi standoff in many areas. "We could not concentrate on the national campaign because the parties waged their battles in the local elections. Someone should have offered the other party a deal," he said.

He said even candidates who ran unopposed had lapses as they became over confident.

Singson admitted the negative issues in the media had affected the voters' perception on the local and national candidates.

"The issues raised during the election period had huge impact (on the voters). The voters did not listen much on the platforms of candidates," he told reporters here.

As early as April, Singson said he knew he had a very slim chance to make it to the Magic 12 as his ranking did not improve in the election surveys.

"I knew that the surveys were accurate. I just could not tell my men (about my slim chance) because it might discourage them," he said.

But what made him happy, he said, was that he and his relatives won overwhelmingly in Ilocos Sur.

His son, Board Member Ronald Singson, won as first district representative while his younger brother, Board Member Jeremias Singson, won as vice governor. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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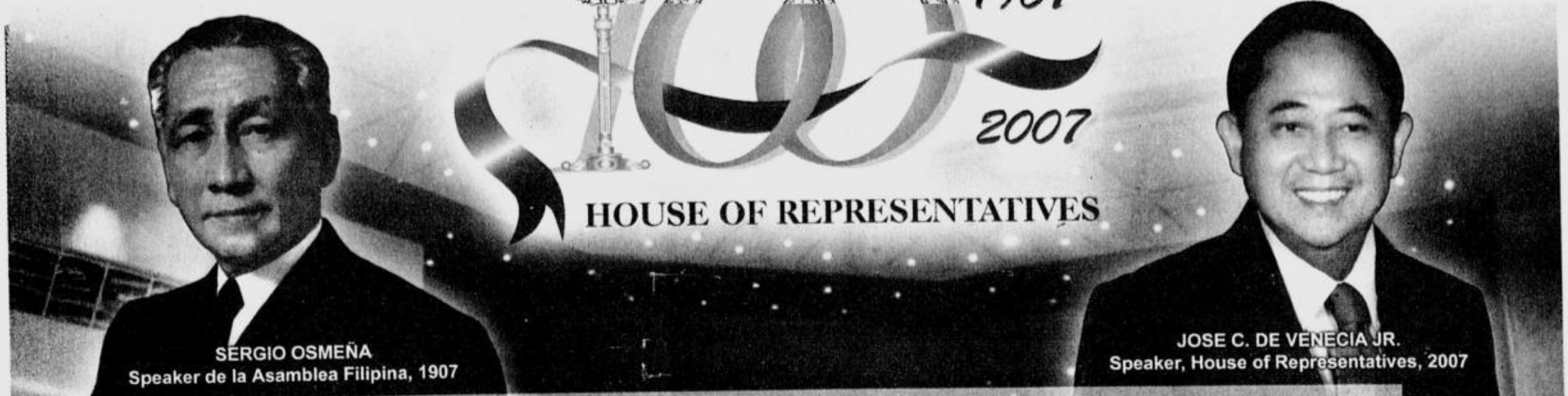


SERGIO OSMEÑA
Speaker de la Asamblea Filipina, 1907

JOSE C. DE VENECIA JR.
Speaker, House of Representatives, 2007

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, the first national legislature, the Philippine Assembly, was inaugurated at the Manila Grand Opera House. Secretary of War William Howard Taft, as representative of U. S. President Theodore Roosevelt, reaffirmed the American purpose and hopes for Filipinos. The Assembly's inaugural session followed at the Marble Hall of the Ayuntamiento Building in Intramuros.

As the "child of the Revolution" and Southeast Asia's first national parliament, the Assembly of 80 members, elected in the first national elections in July 1907, made independence its noblest cause and bequeathed its transcendent task of building the nation to its successor, the House of Representatives. Our people have since moved from war to peace, from colonial rule to political independence, from conflict to consensus, and from factionalism to genuine nationhood.

"This seminal event ushered in a series of successful nationalist and independence movements in colonial Asia and Africa," four-term Speaker Jose de Venecia, the longest-serving House leader in post-war Philippine history, said.

Today, in a global community of nations, the House of Representatives has taken the lead in promoting seminal causes: the Asia-wide Asian Parliamentary Assembly, joined by Pakistan, Iran, Thailand and Indonesia—and the ASEAN Parliamentary Assembly for Southeast Asia jointly with Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia; the global Christian-Muslim Interfaith Dialogue; and the global debt-for-equity program to convert 50 percent of the debt of some 100 nations into equity in mass housing, reforestation, food production, irrigation, health care and clean environment in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, foremost of which is to reduce poverty in half by 2015. The UN General Assembly has approved both initiatives, and the debt-for-equity program is awaiting action by the G-8 nations and the Paris Club.

On this centennial year we, the Members of this House of Representatives, the inheritors of this proud tradition, rededicate ourselves to the continuing task of transforming the nation, tapping as always into our people's fervent idealism and hopes. In this task we invoke the Philippine Assembly's triumphs, achievements and trials as the bastion of our representative democracy, and pray for God's infinite blessings upon all our strivings.

One hundred years of building the nation

PHILIPPINE ASSEMBLY, 1907-1916

SERGIO OSMEÑA
1907-1910; 1910-1912; 1912-1916; 1916-1919; 1919-1922

- Osmeña Retirement Law starts Filipinization by giving American public officials incentives to retire
- Gabaldon Law builds schools in *barrios* nationwide
- Bureau of Labor holds employers responsible for workers' safety
- The Philippine National Bank is created, providing commercial credit
- Gov't purchases friar lands, sells them on installment
- Gov't organizes US-style civil service and courts
- Gov't allots funds for new infrastructure

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1916-1935

MANUEL A. ROXAS
1922-1925; 1925-1927 1928-1930; 1931-1933

QUINTIN B. PAREDES
1933-1935

GIL M. MONTILLA
1935-1938

JOSE Y. YULO
1939-1941

- Philippine Autonomy Bill provides for a bicameral legislature
- Concurrent resolution accepts the Tydings-McDuffie Act for Philippine independence
- Law granting women the right to vote passed in 1933
- The 1935 Constitution is ratified, mandates elections for the Commonwealth government

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMONWEALTH, 1935-1941

- Supreme Court is reorganized, judiciary Filipinized, the Court of Appeals created
- National Economic Council, forerunner of the National Economic and Development Authority, is created
- Court of Industrial Relations settles labor disputes, recognizes workers' right to unionize
- The Institute of National Language develops, adopts national language
- Land reform authorizes the President to order expropriations and acquire portions of large estates used as homesites by bonafide beneficiaries
- Public Land Act nationalizes land acquisition by denying non-Filipinos the right to acquire land
- The National Power Corporation is created to tap cheap electric power, hydroelectric and other power sources
- Anti-Dummy Law fosters economic nationalism
- The Agricultural Tenancy Act creating the Court of Agrarian Reform addresses agrarian unrest
- A liberalized Rural Bank Act gives rise to a hundred private rural banks
- Spanish-era *cedula* or poll tax is discontinued

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 1943-1944

BENIGNO S. AQUINO SR.
1943-1944

The Japanese Occupation replaces the Philippine Commonwealth with a Military Administration, pressures Filipino leaders to establish a civil administration—the Philippine Executive Commission—to increase food production, rebuild war-damaged infrastructure, restore peace and order, and induce guerrillas to surrender. Acts passed during this period were deemed invalid and not binding.

JOSE C. ZULUETA
1945-1945

EUGENIO P. PEREZ
1946; 1946-1949; 1949-1953

JOSE B. LAUREL JR.
1954-1957; 1967-1969 1970-1971

DANIEL Z. ROMUALDEZ
1958-1961; 1962-1962

CORNELIO T. VILLAREAL
1962-1965; 1966-1967 1971-1972

QUERUBE C. MAKALINTAL
1978-1984

NICANOR E. YÑIGUEZ
1984-1986

RAMON V. MITRA
1987-1992

THE RESTORED COMMONWEALTH, & THE THIRD REPUBLIC, 1945-1972

- Economic rehabilitation includes returning PNB's capital stock to its pre-war figure of P10 million
- The government is authorized to participate in the IMF and IBRD
- House concurs with President Roxas' amnesty for collaborators during the Occupation
- Filipinos are given preference in the lease of public market stalls
- Central Bank Bill maintains monetary stability
- Teaching of Spanish is made obligatory in all schools
- Labor is banned on Sundays, Christmas, New Year, Holy Thursday and Good Friday
- House members declare their statements of assets and liabilities for transparency
- The *Noli* and *Fili* are made compulsory reading in schools despite the Catholic Church's opposition
- House backs President Garcia's "Filipino First" policy
- The Communist Party of the Philippines is outlawed

THE INTERIM AND REGULAR BATASANG PAMBANSA, 1978-1986

- The metric system is defined and implemented
- *Batasan* is affiliated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Residential rentals are stabilized and regulated
- Issuance of bouncing checks is penalized

Eighth Congress, 1987-1992

- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law
- Local Government Code of 1991 dramatically expands local autonomy
- Plunder is defined and penalized
- Free High School Education Act gives poor greater access to education
- Generic Act reduces cost of medicines
- Code of conduct for public officials
- The PNP is established
- Trafficking mail-order Filipina brides to foreign nationals is made illegal

Ninth Congress, 1992-1995

- The first health insurance law provides free hospitalization, giving benefits to more than 65 million Filipinos
- Bases Conversion and Development Act helps convert Clark and Subic into free ports and economic zones, and Fort Bonifacio into a satellite city
- The Anti-Subversion Law is repealed
- VAT is restructured, widens tax base to raise revenues
- Entry and scope of foreign banks is liberalized
- President Ramos is given emergency powers to resolve power crisis
- The Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council is constituted to prioritize key legislation
- High-Value Crops Development Act diversifies crops and increases farmers' income
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, OFW Act and Party-list System are strengthened
- Armed Forces Modernization Law

JOSE C. DE VENECIA JR.
1992-1995; 1995-1998; 2001-2004; 2004-2007

Tenth Congress, 1995-1998

(The Ninth Congress and Tenth Congress, from 1992 to 1998, passed 228 economic, financial, and social reform laws, creating the modest Philippine economic miracle.)

- Oil Deregulation/Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Acts stabilize oil prices
- Intellectual Property Code protects against piracy
- Tax Reform Act increases exemptions, allows decreasing corporate tax rate
- Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act allots P120 billion for productivity
- Financing Company Act allows 60% foreign ownership in financial companies
- Anti-Rape Law classifies rape as crime against persons, not against chastity
- Paternity Leave allows parents seven days leave besides sick and vacation leaves
- Hospitals and medical clinics refusing to attend to emergency cases are penalized
- Act sets first computerized elections in 1996 in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
- Comelec is authorized to use the automated system in the May 1998 elections

Eleventh Congress, 1998-2001

MANUEL B. VILLAR JR.
1998-2000

ARNULFO P. FUENTEBELLA
2000-2001

FELICIANO R. BELMONTE, JR.
2001-2001

- Solo Parents Welfare Act
- Electronic Commerce Act prepares the Philippines for globalization
- Anti-Dumping Act
- Seat Belts Use Act
- Philippine Clean Air Act combats air pollution

Twelfth Congress, 2001-2004

- Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act
- Philippine Clean Water Act
- Anti-Money Laundering Act
- Overseas Absentee Voting Act and Dual Citizenship Act benefit eight million Filipinos worldwide
- Government Procurement Reform Act improves transparency
- Electric Power Industry Reform Act reduces power rates, restores the Napocor to financial health
- Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act curtails the growing drug menace
- Anti-Abuse of Women in Intimate Relationships Act

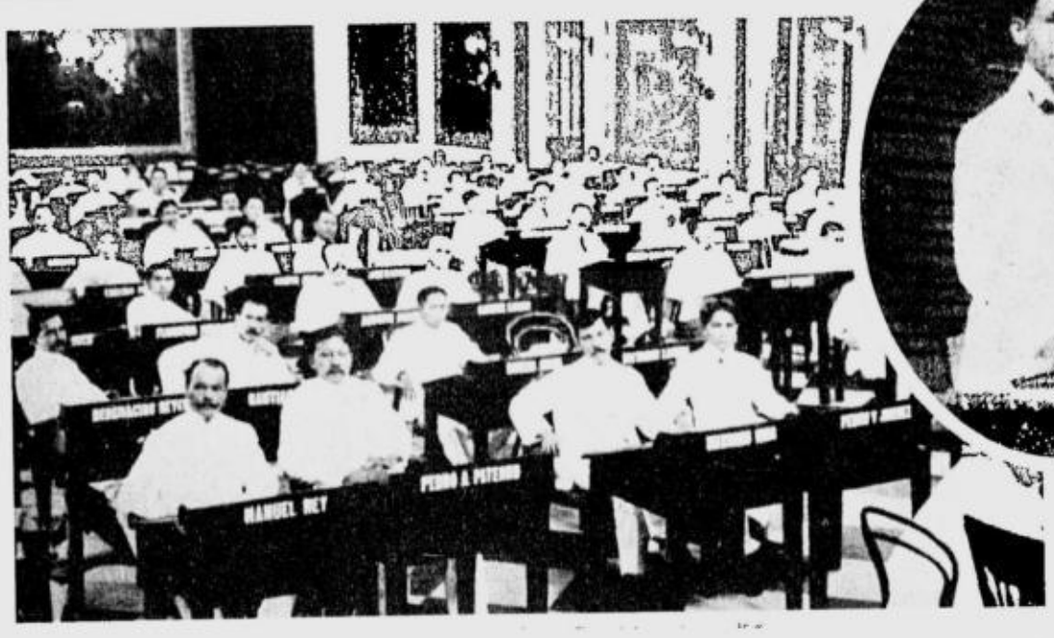
Thirteenth Congress, 2004-2007

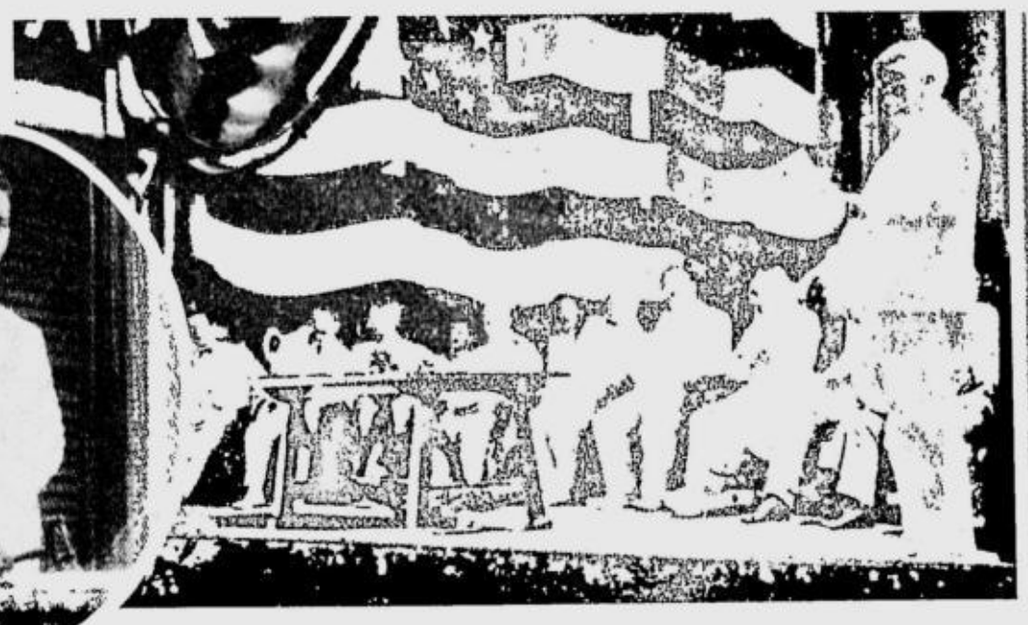
- The Anti-Terrorism law (Human Security Ac) fights terrorism and promotes stability
- EVAT is enacted, creating an economic breakthrough and a movement towards a balanced budget, strengthening the peso, and making funds available for development
- Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act protects minors in conflict with the law
- Personal Equity and Retirement Account Law mandates retirement savings
- Package of tax reform laws is passed to improve collection, prevent tax evasion, open new revenue sources
- Death penalty is outlawed, hailed by the world
- Bio-ethanol Fuel Act develops alternative fuel sources

ASSEMBLY OF THE NATION

Pictures from a century of legislative history

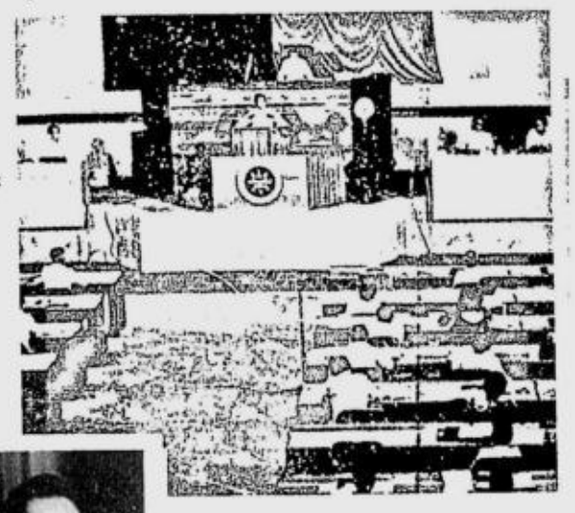
Secretary William Howard Taft, (right photo) on the dais with the members of the Philippine Commission, reads the proclamation of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt establishing the Philippine Assembly before the elected members of the chamber (below) during the Assembly's inaugural ceremonies at the Manila Grand Opera House on October 16, 1907.



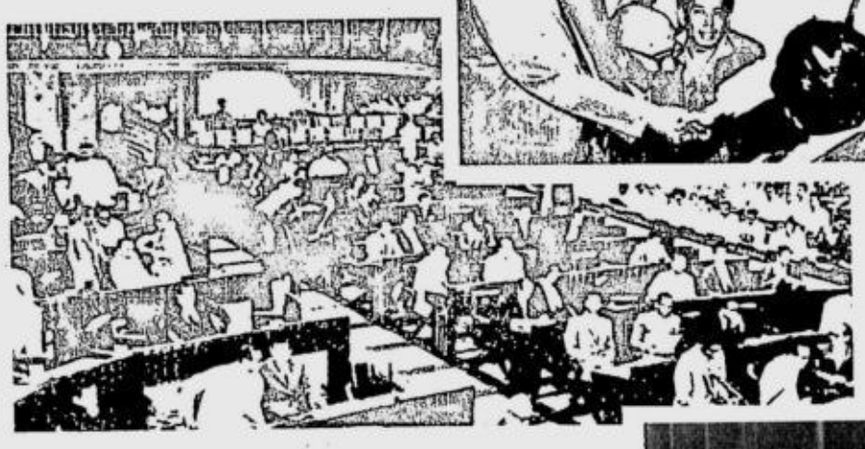


Sergio Osmeña is elected first Speaker of the Philippine Assembly.

Speaker Cornelio Villareal shakes hands with his predecessor, Speaker Jose B. Laurel Jr., 1960s (left, inset). President Ferdinand Marcos at the Batasang Pambansa, 1984 (below).

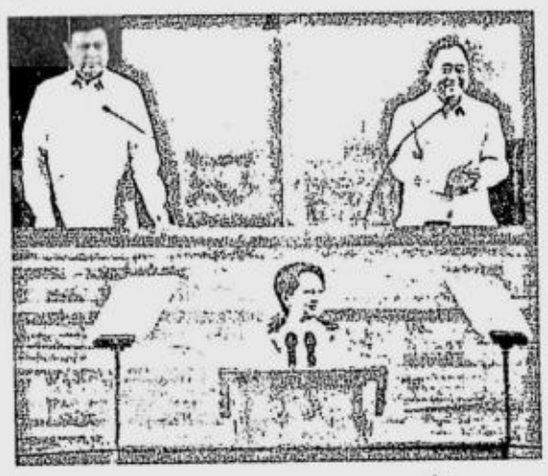


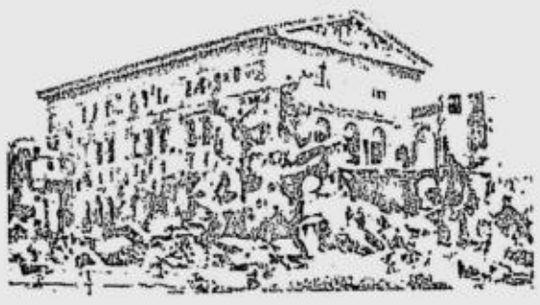
President Jose P. Laurel before the National Assembly during the Japanese Occupation, 1943.



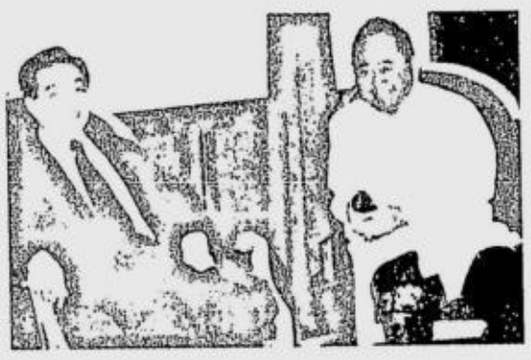
The Session Hall of the House of Representatives at the reconstructed Legislative Building in the 1960s.

(Left) **President Corazon Aquino** with Speaker Ramon V. Mitra (left) and Rep. Antonio Cuenco (right), 1987. (Below) President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo delivers her State-of-the-Nation Address before the joint houses of Congress, 2006. Speaker de Venecia (right) and Senate President Manny Villar (left) look on.





(Above) **The shattered** Legislative Building after the liberation of Manila, 1945. (Right photo) Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander in the Pacific, with Pres. Sergio Osmeña accompanied by Speaker Jose Zulueta (right) and Senate President Manuel Roxas (left) after the special joint session of June 9, 1945 in which the First Commonwealth Congress was finally convened almost four years after its members were elected.



(Left) **Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.** meets US President George W. Bush in the Oval Office, Washington DC, 2003. (Middle) De Venecia welcomes Chinese President Hu Jintao to the House in April 2005. (Right) Emperor Akihito of Japan receives de Venecia at the Imperial Palace, 2006.

House marks centennial on June 7

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA SAID THE House of Representatives will convene a centennial plenary session on June 7 to launch the centennial celebration of the first popularly elected parliament in Southeast Asia.

Before the session, a series of key events will take place, including the unveiling of a historical marker, the launching of a centennial history book titled *Assembly of the Nation,* and the opening of a photo exhibit.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Vice President Noli de Castro, Senate President Manuel Villar, Chief Justice Reynato Puno, and visiting Speakers of Parliament head a glittering roster of dignitaries invited to speak at the special Plenary Session.

Speaker de Venecia, the longest-serving House Speaker in the post-war period, will deliver a response highlighting the legislature's century-long record in building the nation towards independence, social and political stability, peace, prosperity and economic growth.

President Arroyo and Speaker de Venecia will also greet the foreign dignitaries, which include the following:

- **Bangladesh Speaker Muhammad Jamiruddin Sirchar**
- **Cambodian President of Parliament Samdech Heng Samrin**
- **Finland Deputy Speaker Johannes Koskinen**
- **Indonesian Speaker Agung Laksono**
- **Iranian Speaker Gholam Ali Haddad Adel**
- **Malaysian Speaker Tan Sri Dato Seri Diraja Ramli Bin Ngah Talib**
- **Mexican Speaker Jorge Zermeno Infante**
- **Russian Federation Duma Vice Chairman Arthur Chilingarov**
- **Thai President of Parliament Meechai Ruchupan.**
- **Liu Minzu, Special Envoy of Chairman Wu Bangguo of the Chinese Parliament**

The House traces its roots to the country's first elective national legislature organized in 1907 under American colonial rule. The 80-man Philippine Assembly, or *Asamblea Filipina*, was inaugurated on October 7, 1907, following elections held four months earlier. Sergio Osmena of Cebu was elected the first Speaker.

"Our institution has carried the task of giving voice to the highest aspirations of the Filipino people and translating these into law—in the context of a dynamic representative democracy—with all the debate and consensus-building entailed by the process," said de Venecia, a four-term Speaker.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 13TH CONGRESS

HON. JOSE C. DE VENECIA, JR.
SPEAKER

HON. PROSPERO C. NOGRALES
MAJORITY LEADER

HON. FRANCIS JOSEPH G. ESCUDERO
MINORITY LEADER

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. ROBERTO P. NAZARENO
SECRETARY GENERAL

B. GEN. BAYANI N. FABIC AFP (Ret)
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Rep. ALFELOR, FELIX JR. R.
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Mandate for change

EDITORIAL

THE PROCLAMATION OF 10 WINNING SENATORIAL candidates last night—as indeed of the last two winners, we hope in the next few days—has proven to be anticlimactic. Pre-election surveys, an exit poll and early election returns tabulated by various private organizations doing their own quick counts already pointed to a big win for the opposition, and that is exactly what the results show.

The Social Weather Stations survey done in early May saw six Genuine Opposition candidates winning, four from the administration's Team Unity along with two independent candidates. The Pulse Asia exit poll had a similar result. However, spokesmen for the administration's Team Unity said the surveys were all wrong and accused the pollsters of helping the opposition condition people's minds to expect an opposition victory by "trending." They said the administration's vastly superior political machinery would simply smother the opposition with "command votes" delivered by its local candidates, 80 percent of whom were running unopposed.

The TU and administration spokesmen were right, of course. The pollsters had erred—but in a way no one, either in the administration or the opposition, probably thought possible. As the results of the elections began to trickle in, an amazing trend was immediately discernible: opposition candidates would take not only six, but seven and possibly eight, of the 12 Senate seats being contested. This trend is still holding, with only about a million votes left to be canvassed.

How did the opposition, which could not gather a decent crowd at its campaign rallies, pull out such stunning victory? How did its candidates, with their limited resources, upstage the veterans and better-known personalities fielded by the administration?

Those who ran the campaign of Team Unity now admit that the administration's vaunted political machinery couldn't get going in many places. They said their local candidates were engrossed in their own campaigns to bother about their senatorial candidates. "The command votes were somehow commandeered from us," said TU campaign manager Reli German.

President Macapagal-Arroyo apparently agrees. Juan Miguel Zubiri, the last administration candidate with at least a mathematical chance of winning the 12th slot, has said the President felt "exasperated" by the outcome of the elections and blamed the local officials for her candidates' defeat. "She felt a bit bad because she thought that at the very least, the local government units or the machinery would deliver five senators to the Magic 12," Zubiri said.

It is a convenient excuse, but it may not even be the main reason for the defeat of so many administration candidates. The inconvenient truth is that if fingers have to be pointed, they should be directed toward the President. Consider: Her bitterest critics, like Francis Escudero and Panfilo Lacson, are up there among the leaders, and two alleged key plotters of a military coup are also among the winners. On the other hand, none of the candidates deemed closest to her, including her former chief of staff Michael Defensor, were able to make it to the Senate. It may be unflattering to her, but the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from this is that her enmity breathed life into the candidacies of her foes while her endorsement was a kiss of death for her friends.

Ms Arroyo, however, can turn this defeat into an opportunity. She should see the election results as a mandate for change—a change of policies and directions, particularly in the areas that have earned her administration the loudest protests and harshest condemnation: human rights violations and graft and corruption. And she can start the shift by firing from her Cabinet and other top positions the officials who have proven an embarrassment to her and a disgrace to the entire nation.

Useless sanctions

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE UNITED NATIONS IS CONSIDERING INCREASING SANCtions against Iran, which will do absolutely no good. Iran is obviously intent on producing nuclear weapons, and nothing short of force will stop it.

As for North Korea, its intentions are the same, but its methods are slightly different.

Iran and North Korea pose significant security problems for their areas of the world and for the United States. If their nuclear ambitions aren't checked, the world could pay a high price later on.

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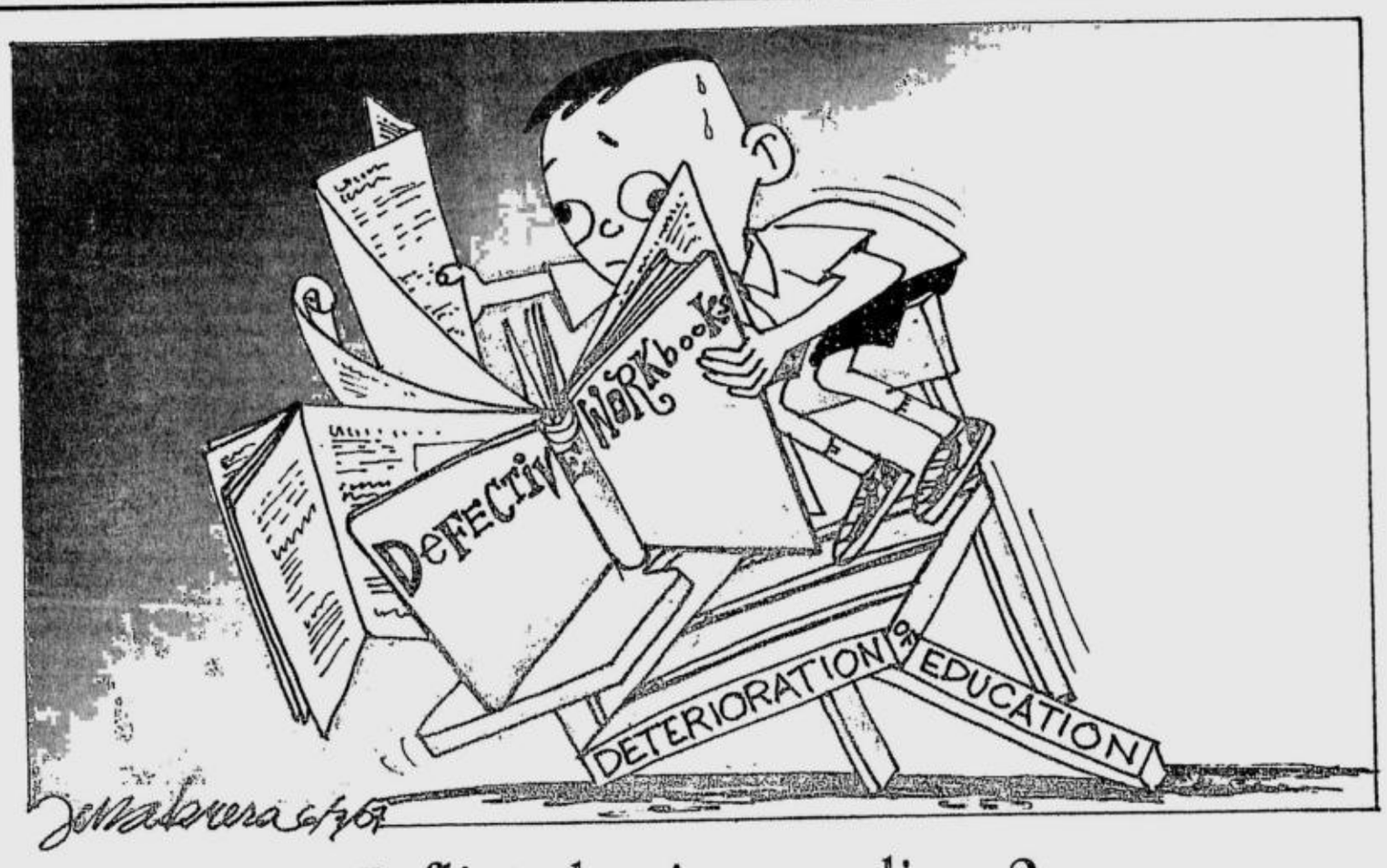

Inflicted pain as policy: 2

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"VIEWPOINT" ANALYZED CEBU CITY MAYOR Tomas Osmeña's penchant to trash frail bystanders in order to claw opponents in the column: "Inflicted pain as policy." (INQUIRER, 4/21/05) Is there a second version?

"Nobody likes to see schoolchildren kicked in the teeth," Cebu Daily News snapped. But the re-elected Osmeña kicked—"after he got walloped good in Lahug, his third straight defeat at the hands of an efficient barangay captain: Mary Ann delos Santos."

Belatedly fuming over election slights, His Honor scrubbed a P15-million Lahug school project. Transfer those 20 classrooms to Talamban, he ordered. He also spiked Lahug's trash truck fuel allocation and garbage collectors' allowances. Over 5,000 elementary students cluster in Lahug. So, why Talamban? Because "that's where I won big," Osmeña retorted. And he didn't even blink.

"Taxpayers' money paid for that project," CDN stressed. Osmeña's yen loans burden every Cebuano resident-taxpayer with a P60,645 repayment bill burden—double the national IOU. Out of 128 cities, Cebu is strapped with the heftiest liabilities, notes the Commission on Audit.

"Children of Lahug deserve that school, even if their elected elders don't," the daily added. "Shoving low-income public school children out of their promised school building is using spite in a dangerous way."

Punitive orders hit replay buttons. In earlier elections, 18 barangays voted for Osmeña's rival. "They don't recognize me," the mayor fumed. "I won't recognize them"—and scrubbed all 18 from city hall's project list. Add Lahug to that wringer.

"Did Osmeña demote himself, from chief executive of a major city to overlord of politically friendly barangays?" the "Governance by Hamlets" editorial asked then. "By abandoning a substantial portion of the city, he reduces unwittingly his own writ .... Exclusion by discrimination is demented strategy." Or inflicted pain policy 3?

"*Mag puasa mo* (You fast)," Sen. John Osmeña taunted his fellow-Cebuanos. Then President Joseph Estrada's point man, the senator shuffled projects on the basis of political subservience. Cebuanos didn't forget. In the 2007 elections, the senator limped in as No. 20 in his home province.

Tomas the mayor can't stand John the senator and vice-versa. But they're clones in stomping on innocent bystanders for political ends. *Mag puasa mo*, Mayor Osmeña told Lahug school kids. "Wait until you see children holding classes under a tree," Sun Star columnist Frank Malilong cautioned.

De los Santos launched, meanwhile, a peso-peso collection for the 20 needed classrooms. Our laundrywoman donated a peso. But Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, whose "Ciudad" development project Osmeña derailed, will release P5 million on Friday. Children's welfare should be paramount, Cardinal Ricardo Vidal cautioned. No, the mayor snorted. Compliance with city rules for building permits comes first.

"We have a grand memory for forgetting," Adlai Stevenson once said. So, the Freeman fired an editorial reminder: "Here we go again. This isn't the first time Osmeña exhibited willingness to let other people suffer." To punish candle peddlers who challenged eviction orders, the mayor bolted Basilica del Santo Niño gates. Inflicted pain policy 4?

Osmeña also booted Talisay vendors out of city markets, after their congressman, Eduardo Gullas, staked a midnight claim to 53 hectares of Cebu's south reclamation project, the Freeman recalled. This was stomping on vulnerable peddlers to screw an opponent. Inflicted pain policy 5?

He sued to cancel Talisay's chartered city status. The law (RA 8979) creating Talisay "does not suffer from any constitutional or statutory infirmities," ruled the Court of Appeals in a 17-page decision penned by Justice Apolinario Bruselas Jr. What's the motive for this belated action, the court asked. Answer: Inflicted pain policy 6.

Wait. There's more. For 192 days, Osmeña barricaded the six-lane South Coastal Road which passes Talisay. Thousands of commuters burned time, money, gas and tempers in getting to piers, export zones or towns. Damage ran into millions.

In response to a citizen's suit, the courts ruled: the mayor usurped power by blocking a national highway. Dismantle those illicit barricades, Judge Soliver Peras directed.

"Thousands of commuters will testify I never closed that road," the mayor muttered. "I only regulated it," he said.

Stomping on innocent commuters for the purpose of assailing opponents became inflicted pain policy 7.

In May 2006, Osmeña tried to gut Lahug's tax base by smudging map borders. Built-up areas would be transferred to Talamban and barangays where his followers dominated. "I'm only trying to spread the butter," he lamely explained when skewered, since that power belongs to the council—a "harem of eunuchs" who've always murmured amen to the mayor: from yen loans, to 173 vigilante murders and now trashing school kids. Inflicted pain policy 8?

No one would ever ask if President Sergio Osmeña would stomp on candle peddlers, commuters or primary school toddlers. So, why does his grandson shred that statesman's legacy of compassionate fairness? "I don't care if my decision is not popular," the mayor huffed. That's the right response to the wrong query.

The correct question, "Don Sergio" would have asked the mayor, should instead be: Is it right—or wrong—to inflict pain on the innocent and frail in order to shoot political crap? To call evil good is the ultimate perversion.

* * *

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Light of learning

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOME OF THE STORIES WERE POIGNANT. An 11-year-old boy in Banaue was reading by a fire. No, not by a fireside but by a fire, in the open wilderness on a moonless night. The boy was one of a brood, and he was the one who most had problems reading. His parents and elder siblings were helping him improve and had built a fire using pine splinters as kindling. The boy held out a book against the flickering light and was plodding through the text. Asked why he was having difficulty reading, he said it was because the letters were small and he had poor eyesight.

You thought: The reading might improve, but the eyesight was going to get worse. But such was the dedication of the family to educating one of their own amid a mountain of adversity, bigger than the mountains around them, your heart went out to them.

The other stories told of the usual woes. Classrooms were in short supply, teachers were in short supply, books were in short supply, money was in short supply, and patience was in short supply. There was the usual supply of perfidy and malfeasance, hustling and conning. One elementary public school in Payatas was charging a fee from enrollees worth P200 that wasn't sanctioned by the Department of Education. The principal would later say that fee was purely optional, and was more in the nature of a donation than anything else. A toothless driver would say not so, his son was refused admission because he couldn't pay it.

Every time school opens, you get scenes like this that make you laugh and cry, praise and decry. But for the most part, that gets you depressed, making you wonder where this country is going. If anything speaks of the fragileness of our future, this is it. The opening of classes is supposed to fill you with a sense of uplift, of minds being opened and enlightenment planted there amid the bedlam of traffic and tribulation of rain and flood. The opening of **our** classes gives you only a sense of drift, of a country desperately trying to survive, of the poor hoping against hope that being able to read and write, count and account all the way to graduation will, somehow, give them a crack at finding a job. Preferably abroad, as an OFW.

The contrast with other countries, not least our immediate neighbors, is glaring. In their capitals at least, kids in neat uniforms are bundled off in cars or school buses or trains on their way to impregnable schoolhouses. It's the most moving thing in the world to see a kid struggling by wood fire to make sense of the jumble of letters in a book—it might as well be hieroglyphics—but you also get to wonder how that kid is going to compete later on with another kid who is even now sitting on a desk with a PC monitor in front of him, and roving the Internet. In other Asian countries, the computer to student ratio in high school at least is 1:1. Indeed, the whole spectacle of a country struggling to pull itself up by its bootstraps, the boots worn out at the end and the toes of the wearer peeping out of them, is inspiring, but you also get to wonder how it is going to fare later on in a global environment where competition is as fierce as gladiatorial combat.

More than anything, it's the opening of classes that drives home to me the point about what corruption means. Corruption by itself holds little meaning; it is an abstraction. Particularly when the sums reach millions—not to speak of billions—the mind is unable to grasp the enormity of it. Even saying that corruption is thievery, that corruption is pillage, that corruption is stealing, doesn't quite get the message across. All people get is the image of public officials enriching themselves on taxes which, in this country, mean nothing more or less than tribute, the kind vassals give to their liege.

The opening of our classes shows the sinews, the bones, the flesh-and-blood of corruption. Indeed, the state of our education drives home the taste, the smell, the sights and sounds of corruption. You get to see what corruption really means in what you see and hear this week—or what you don't see and hear this week. Corruption is taking away:

It is the classroom with the aluminum roof and fortified walls that should be there but is not there, which is why teacher and students are out there in the open, besieged by wind and rain. It is the books and pencils and crayons that should be there but are not there; only grimy kids in shirts with the faces of candidates fading away are there, wiping off the sleep from their eyes, waiting for the first shift to finish so they can have their turn at the classrooms. It is the shouts of joy and expectation and the smell of new clothes and rosy hopes that should be there but aren't there, only the bedraggled groans of those whose summers have ended or the sighs of relief of those who get a respite from scavenging or foraging for food. Or so in the public schools, which is where most of this country's kids go.

Corruption isn't just drowning in bills flung into the air over one's bed, which is how it is in the movies, though I know one congressman who did that quite literally to know how it felt to be filthy rich, emphasis on filthy. It is taking away. It is grabbing the scraps of food from the table of the hungry. It is seizing the jeepney money of a Grade 2 kid, forcing him to walk in frayed rubber slippers in the smoldering heat or raging flood, through fetid sidewalks and semen-smelling alleys, to the decrepit structure that is a light in a storm-tossed sea. It is holding up this country's future the way holdup men (who are often dismissed or active enlisted men) hold up banks, gunning down poorly paid security guards without pity or thought.

Each time a school year starts, I wonder who needs education more badly. Our kids, or our public officials?

A handsome book rises to an epochal occasion

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE LAST BATTLEGROUND IN THIS ELECTION is the No. 12th slot in the senatorial race. So stiff is the fight between Aquilino Pimentel III and Juan Miguel Zubiri, both Mindanaoans, that the 360,000 votes of Maguindanao are disputed by all sorts of political groups. The latest to hem in are the Liberal Party Drilon faction and an opposition citizens' group, which are demanding that the Comelec nullify the election there. Their nervousness about Zubiri's sprinting past Pimentel is an indication that they know the former may have won.

* * *

Recently I said that if Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio is accusing Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez of playing politics when he allowed his prosecutors to file a rebellion case against Rep. Crispin Beltran and several militant lawmakers, the same accusation can be thrown back at him. In dismissing the case, Carpio, the *ponente* of that ruling of the high court's second division, disregarded the separate rulings of two judges of the Makati RTC, who sustained the prosecution's finding of probable cause against the leftist lawmakers. But there were other ironies in the second division's ruling. For one, Carpio gave inordinate attention to the procedure to be followed in determining probable cause; but the way the Supreme Court decision was handed down was itself quite defective and violated constitutionally mandated procedure for due process.

* * *

It should be explained that each division of the Supreme Court has five members, unlike those of the Court of Appeals and the Sandiganbayan, which have only three members per division. This is rightly so, as the high court is the final arbiter of the law and if it's not thorough, where does one go? In the Court of Appeals and Sandiganbayan, if there is no unanimity of decision among the three members of a division, a special court is constituted; two justices from other divisions are called in to sit in the deliberations, and a simple majority of the five is required to promulgate a ruling.

But in the Beltran ruling, only three justices participated in the deliberations. Justices Carpio and Leo Quisumbing voted affirmatively; but Justice Dante Tinga merely concurred, which could mean he may have had reservations about other matters. On the other hand, Justice Conchita Carpio Morales was out of the country and Justice Presbiterio Velasco inhibited himself. This short-cutting of established requirements of due process in the high court is especially lamentable in view of the fact that a most sensitive case, rebellion, was involved. Was the division playing to the gallery?

* * *

Justice delayed is not only justice denied, it rakes up violence and could provoke even more. This is happening in Antique where a man from Cavite, identified by the police as someone with a criminal record, shot and wounded another man over a game of *tong-its*. The assailant turned out to have been "housed" in the residence of gubernatorial candidate Arturo Pacificador, the principal suspect in the slaying, 21 years ago, of Antique's hero, Evelio Javier. Some Antiqueños are now wondering whether Pacificador and Evelio's brother, reelected Rep. Exequiel Javier, have joined forces against reelectionist Gov. Sally Perez. They note that Javier's man, Fiscal Napoleon Abiera, a member of the province's board of canvassers, has apparently cowed the two other BOC members into delaying Perez's proclamation, despite orders from Commissioner Florentino Tuason to proceed with it. The fiscal was quoted as saying that Manila cannot dictate on the local BOC. The Comelec should not delay Perez's proclamation; tension is building up in Antique, which has a history of violence.

* * *

Tonight the House of Representatives, led by Speaker Jose de Venecia, launches the celebration of its 100th anniversary with a glittering dinner at the Manila Hotel. It will be graced by President Macapagal-Arroyo and by local and foreign dignitaries. The House traces its origins to the Philippine Assembly that was established in 1907 by the Philippine Bill of 1902. The history of the House reflects the modern history of our young country; hence, one of the highlights of its centennial celebration is the production of a gigantic (312 pages) coffee-table book, aptly titled "Assembly of the Nation."

A major project of the House, the book is the collaborative effort of five writers over eight months: longtime journalist Emmanuel Albano, currently the House deputy secretary general for public information; INQUIRER columnist/historian Manuel Quezon III; Jeremy Barnes, chief of the Malacañang Museum; the late journalist Manuel Martinez, and UP History Prof. Ricardo Jose, whose specialization is the history on Japanese occupation. The book celebrates—from the historical background of colonization to the seven chapters of the 20th and early 21st centuries, and on to the epilogue on future visions—in elegant language the commemorative history of our legislature. But inevitably it's RP history too, for it dwells on the various landmark laws upon which our nation was painstakingly built and today stands. Beautifully printed with rare photos in black and white or full color, it's so richly researched that each epoch comes alive with the interplay of the forceful political personalities over time, showing off the Filipinos' political sophistication even during the *fin du siecle*. Curiously, many of the issues that are being hotly debated in the House in our time were also debated in the past hundred years—showing how times come and go but human nature hardly changes.

"Assembly of the Nation" is a handsome book that rises to an epochal occasion. I couldn't put it down once I began reading it, and I guarantee, you won't too. More insights next time.

The grace of remembering

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

LAST WEEK'S COLUMN ("DISAPPEARED") which was about remembering those who vanished in the night—and where I used excerpts from an article ("The Missing and Dead and those who Survive to Tell the Story") that I wrote in the 1980s—elicited some heart-tugging feedback. One of them was from poet Grace Monte de Ramos who had been moved many years ago by that feature story that came out in the Mr. & Ms. Special edition (the "subversive" edition edited by the present INQUIRER editor in chief) and was "provoked" to write a poem.

For Grace, last week's column again released a stream of memories.

I seldom use readers' letters and the ensuing exchange of thoughts (via e-mail) in this column but, maybe, this one with Grace would resonate with those who believe that we should not totally leave the past behind.

* * *

Dear Ceres,

I've just read "Disappeared." Was this so long ago, you ask. Yes, it was, because from this remove, I can't recall if I ever thanked you for the story that you reprinted today. You see, the women in the story were the inspiration—though I find that word insipid in this case; it was more of provocation, instigation—for my poem "Brave Woman."

It was not an easy poem to write, and it took me some time to get it to move. That happened only after I let go of my third-person, omniscient-point-of-view voice, and allowed the mother to speak and tell the story herself. (Did I say "allow"? It felt more like "compelled.") It was her story, after all. The poem belonged to her.

"Brave Woman" was first published in 1983, if I remember correctly, and it was last published (as far as I know) in 2003, as part of an anthology of anti-Iraq war poems ("Poets Against the War," edited by Sam Hamill, published by Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books). I believe it is also in some textbooks.

But to tell you the truth, I am a little tired of it. Sometimes I wish I could bury it, lock it away with other juvenilia. How could I let it go, though?

You could not let the story go. We cannot let it go, because more than 20 years later, mothers are still going through the same ordeal. Twenty years, and it seems we haven't learned one lesson!

Obviously, more work needs to be done, even as the mourning continues. So tiring, if you think of it. The task looks formidable, Sisyphian even. But I hope you never tire of it. Thank you for writing about Manang Dina and others like her, thank you for giving a face and voice to the women who bear the burden of injustice.

God bless,

Grace

Here is Grace's 1983 poem, "Brave Woman":

I am a mother of sons.
Two joined the army when they were young;
There was not enough money for school,
They had no skills for jobs in foundries
And factories, and it was easy to sign up
And learn how to handle a gun.

I am a mother of sons, two sons
And one, the youngest, now gone.
In his youth he was taken
By men whose names I never will learn.
I only know they were soldiers, like my sons,
Cradling fearsome guns.
He was a fine young man. I took care of him
For seventeen years and they took him away
And now I am searching for his bones.

I will never learn their names.
Alone I try to imagine the scene: were their faces
Bearded or clean-shaven?
Perhaps their bodies were robust.
Did they wear uniforms the color of shrivelled
Sampaguita or fresh horseshit?
How pointed the bullets from their guns?

My soldier sons come home
When life in the barracks is still.
I hide their brother's picture;
It makes them cry and remember.
Perhaps they, too (God forbid it),
Have given other mothers sorrow.
Perhaps my son had to pay for what they borrowed.

I cannot cry, though I am told
It is better to cry and let go.
Where is my son's body for me to bury?
I only wear my grief in the lines
Of my face, my sunken cheeks.
Silent, I mourn a woman's
Bitter lot: to give birth to men
Who kill and are killed.

* * *

I wrote back to tell Grace that yes, she had thanked me a long time ago and sent me her autographed book of poems. And she replied: "See, it really was a long time ago, since I've forgotten about thanking you and all! Where did the time go? Here I was, trying to slip into domestic anonymity, hoping to live out the rest of my life as a hermit (with Internet access)—but the world intrudes. You've written many columns that have moved me, but that one really compelled me (that word again) to actually let you know. It got me depressed and I had to do something to ease the aching.

"Yes, you may use my letter, but maybe you should leave out the first two sentences in the second paragraph... (I did not delete it, Grace.) The poem might sound corny to me but maybe the young people who don't remember martial law will take something from it."

The aching, yes, the aching in remembering. But it, too, is grace.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

A way forward

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

CHRISTIAN MONSOD ALWAYS LIKES TO SAY that within every politician, there's the seed of a future statesman. Every time I meet him, I'm reminded of his words—and his perennial optimism.

The martyrdom of Ninoy Aquino is a case in point. We forget that he was on his way home to try to reason with Ferdinand Marcos: he felt that the innate patriotism of the dictator could be appealed to, and that if only he could sit down and talk to him, he would be able to convince Marcos to embark on a smooth transition back to democracy.

Here is how the lame duck can still transform herself into a swan—or put another way, keep her goose from being cooked.

I hope Sen. Kiko Pangilinan will revive his proposal for a law to establish a Special Independent Prosecutor who'd be tasked by Congress with doing the preliminary investigation for impeachable offenses. We need the equivalent of a People's Fiscal, who could do a preliminary investigation, so to speak, with subpoena powers and an independent budget; who would be appointed by Congress and not serve at any president's pleasure.

While the investigation takes place, the various branches of government can do their work. If the prosecutor feels an impeachment is warranted, Congress can debate the merits of the case presented by the prosecutor, instead of camouflaging its ignorance of the law by means of incoherent speeches made by both sides. I can think of one citizen who would have the professional prestige and the personal integrity to be an independent, and zealous, prosecutor: Justice Isagani Cruz.

And I hope, further, that the House of Representatives learns its lesson from the past two impeachment attempts: the majority hoodwinked the minority in the 13th Congress and approved impeachment rules that put the cart before the horse. But the majority needs to realize that winning by means of points of order or a clever application of the rules is not enough when dealing with public opinion. The House would be wise to adopt rules for the 14th Congress that are similar to those used in earlier congresses.

Specifically: the rules in place at the time of President Quirino, when the very first impeachment effort was made, would be a good model to follow. Those older rules, as I've pointed out before, put the presentation of evidence ahead of the determination of the form and substance of an impeachment complaint. Which makes more sense to ordinary citizens trying to follow the proceedings, the politicians who aspire to be the prosecution, as well as any official who would have to mount a defense.

These proposals don't have President Macapagal-Arroyo solely in mind: they have all presidents in mind, and other impeachable officials, too. God knows that the impeachable offenses committed by all sorts of officials just keep multiplying. But let's have more light and less heat, by all means: and illumination comes from a system that rewards proper preparation, thorough presentation and reasonable process of confrontation that denies no one, neither accused nor accuser, their day in the sun.

And if Congress can easily do these things, so can civic groups; and the administration can do some confidence-building, too, either in partnership with Congress, or without it.

Let me propose that it would be wise if all talk of constitutional amendments takes place according to clearly defined parameters, a national consensus, if you will. The parameters are simple. First, if a people's initiative is to be attempted, let it be for something aimed at solving one of the perennial ills of this nation—which is, that we haven't had a president elected by a majority vote in a regular election since 1969.

I will support a people's initiative with only one purpose: to propose runoff elections for the presidency in 2010 and beyond, so we will never again have a president who begins a new term with the majority of the country opposed to that leader. If no candidate achieves 50 percent the first time around, the top two candidates should then face each other in a runoff.

The French adopted such a system because De Gaulle knew they would never submit to being governed by a leader selected by a minority of their countrymen; the Indonesians adopted such a system (an Indonesian journalist once told me) because they looked at our country's post-Edsa experience and viewed minority presidencies as doomed from the start.

Or, let's not forget that the public can directly propose legislation, and so, if Congress will not pass an anti-dynasty law, there is nothing to stop citizens' groups from proposing one, and campaigning for its submission to the electorate in a plebiscite.

Second, if Congress itself is to propose any amendments, let the proposals involve only the economic provisions of the Constitution. And third, if a thorough, sincere debate on proposals such as federalism, the parliamentary system, or unicameralism is to take place—and no one should fear such a debate, or letting the people decide, provided such proposals are for the future and not for the immediate political advantage of incumbents—then let it happen by means of a freely elected constitutional convention.

That is, if the public still thinks the country's resources in time and money would be better spent on discussing constitutional matters, rather than on simply making our existing system work.

Finally, let the President pledge to revamp her Cabinet, and submit her nominees to the thorough scrutiny of the Commission on Appointments; if anyone is rejected or bypassed, find someone else. That would be a sign she is truly prepared to accept the principle of checks-and-balances, and to abide by the limits imposed by the democratic system. And the Ombudsman and all the Comelec commissioners should resign, immediately.

What for are schools?

YOUNG BLOOD

Karen Diane Sta. Maria

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

COEDS EQUATE SCHOOL WITH WARDROBE. MORE THAN on books, professors and the curriculum, students allot a lot of time researching on the latest back-to-school fashion and hairstyles. For them, the start of the school year is an opportunity to shop for new clothes—lumped together with the usual school materials, of course, so that their parents will not notice the purchases.

On the first day of school, students sashay down hallways wearing new shoes, new socks, new blouses and, I bet you, new underwear, too. Each of them walks like a rich kid, even as their parents recoil at the sight of the deductions on their paychecks because of the loans they got for their children's school expenses.

This is the problem with Filipino kids: they don't know their parents' money's worth. Unlike in other cultures, Filipino parents place upon themselves the responsibility of paying for their children's education. But even as parents go crazy looking for money for their children's schooling, the kids go crazy thinking of what clothes to buy, which guy to hook or which girl to date.

These kids never learn to value their education because they do not know the real value of the money that goes into their tuition and other school expenses. They did not suffer high blood pressure or soak their feet in puddles of rain after work, so they don't realize that they break their parents' hearts with every subject they flunk.

Most kids see education as just a passing fancy and never realize how hard their parents work to earn the money to pay for their tuition. Have you noticed how fast teenybopper magazines sell in May? That is because May is the month when young girls forage for the latest fads and makeup tips so that come June, they can strut around campus carrying the latest bags or sporting the newest hairstyles. These kids go to school to parade their new stuff or their bodies.

Have you noticed how gym enrollment spikes during summer? Aside from getting flat tummies for summer outings, college kids "prepare" their bodies for the coming school year to elicit "oohs" and "aahs" and hopefully snag the man or woman of their dreams. These college kids go to school to date.

Elementary students have their own back-to-school agenda. Spiderman lunch boxes, Barbie stroller bags and Bratz pencil cases are just some of the reasons some kids want to go back to school. They go to school to play.

Come to think of it, nobody goes to school nowadays to learn. Kids have a hundred reasons for getting excited about going back to school, but they have nothing to do with enriching their minds and broadening their knowledge. And their poor parents often pass up a good meal for themselves so they can save money for their kids who will just play, brag and date in school.

Students never realize the importance of education as they go about their hedonistic ways while in school. For kids, school is time away from their parents and a time to try smoking, drinking, drugs and sex.

It would have been better if Filipino students were to fend for themselves. If they had callused hands or their blood pressure shot up while they were at work, maybe they wouldn't spend that P100 on a pack of cigarettes and two bottles of beer while hanging out in a nearby pub instead of attending a Math class.

True, education is a combination of intellectual, mental and emotional learning. These experiences are essential for a person's holistic growth. But students must always remember the principal purpose for which their parents send them to the best schools despite the sky-rocketing tuition: so that they may enjoy a good life in the future.

Parents don't send their kids to school for their own self-gratification. They would spend their money on weight-loss programs or on a new vehicle if that is what they want. They spend thousands when June comes for the love of their children and to make sure that when they're gone, at least their kids have had a crack at success.

But many kids consider it more important than finding answers to their assignment to discover what matches the new blouses they bought at a European brand sale last summer.

It will be a continuing cycle if Filipino kids don't realize soon to what lengths their parents go just so they may have a good education. Kids will continue going to school to date or to glam up. And parents will continue to break their backs to earn enough for the next year's tuition while their kids cut classes and watch the latest movies.

Filipino parents will continue to sacrifice while kids keep up with their hedonistic ways. Because parents are too proud to admit to their kids how they cried at night, how they fell from the jeepney during a client call, how they skipped lunches, or how they almost stole some petty cash just to have money for their tuition.

It is high time parents and children discussed openly their family finances. Parents shouldn't be embarrassed to show their kids their tuition receipts. It's not like one is saying, "Hey, this is how much I spent for you, you brat," but it is more like giving them an idea of how expensive education can be and how much it takes to show them one's love and concern. The kids ought to know how much blood, sweat and tears parents shed to send them to school each year. Kids should know that each pack of cigarette they smoke or each bottle of beer they drink is probably one taxi ride their mothers had forgone during a stormy night so she can put the money aside for their allowance.

Some financial institutions offer wealth planning seminars for youngsters and teens, where experts give advice on how to manage even small amounts of money. If children attended these sessions, they would have a better grasp of the concept of money and perhaps appreciate how much a college course takes away from their parents' bank accounts.

Then they will learn the real value of education.

Karen Diane Sta. Maria, 24, is a communications professional in one of the country's leading private banks.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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RA 9439 missed the nail's head

REPUBLIC ACT 9439 (THE HOSpital Detention Law) somehow provides temporary relief for poor patients who could be illegally detained in hospitals because of unpaid bills. But it failed to address the very reason poor patients are forced to go to charity wards in private hospitals.

People these days can hardly rely on public health services because even public hospitals now charge patients (who are mostly indigent) many fees: emergency room fee, out-patient department fee, operating room fee, etc. Moreover, many public hospitals are forced to admit patients twice or thrice their actual capacity. Overcrowded rooms and beds force many poor patients to go to the charity wards of private hospitals.

The government missed the nail's head when it criticized and pledged to punish private hospitals that "detain" patients. There is truth in the claim of the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines (PHAP) that only one in every 10 patients who signed a promissory note actually returns to settle their debts with the hospital.

With RA 9439, what President Macapagal-Arroyo did was tantamount to merely "bandaging the wound instead of diagnosing the cause." It placed the blame on private hospitals instead of establishing an accessible health care system—by allotting sufficient funds for public hospitals and facilities.

In fact, for 2007, the health care system has been given only .1 percent or a little over P11.5 billion out of the national budget of P1.126 trillion. This means each of the 80 million Filipinos has been allotted only P144.53 in medical services and medicines for the entire year! That is, if they get any medical treatment and medicine at all.

Meanwhile, debt servicing continues to get a large slab of the pie with P318.18 billion or 28 percent of the budget.

As long as the government remains indifferent to the people's needs, it is apt for Filipinos to strive to gain access to quality health care services.

The newly elected officials, on the other hand, should heed the call for the government to respond to people's needs and welfare.

—ELEANOR JARA, MD,
executive director,
MERRY MIA, MD,
director, Health Education Training and Services Council for Health and Development (CHD),
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LETTERS TO THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

What makes a real Filipino

THIS REFER'S TO RECAH TRINIdad's column titled "Can the RP national team find its true name?" (INQUIRER, 5/28/07)

Is there such a thing as a pure Filipino? I don't think so. The Filipino race is a mixed race. His surname alone, "Trinidad," isn't pure Filipino. I guess he has to read Philippine history again to understand that we are not a "pure race."

It does not mean that just because a person has Italian or Tonghn blood, he is not Filipino. Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian or other Asians can be considered pure, but not Filipinos who have Spanish, Chinese (etc.) last names. We belong to different races. We are like the citizens of the United States who consider themselves Americans even though they literally belong to different races.

So, please, I am asking Trinidad to be fair with our national basketball team members who are playing their hearts out for our country. For me, that is enough for them to be called Filipinos.

—DARRY CRUZ,
n_critic@hotmail.com

Ong's citizenship: Let the issue rest

FR. JOAQUIN BERNAS' MAY 28 column in the INQUIRER clearly and concisely explains the basis for the assertion that Justice Gregory Ong is a natural-born Filipino.

Other columnists, who do not have the same legal expertise as Father Bernas, almost succeeded in muddling the issue and besmirching the reputation of Justice Ong.

Father Bernas' analysis should finally put the citizenship issue to rest.

—IGNACIO R. BUNYE,
press secretary,
Malacañang, Manila

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AFTER DECADES of land reform, farmers are still struggling to own the land they till INQUIRER PHOTO

Yes, agrarian reform failed but the country needs it

IN THE LETTER TITLED "LAND reform doesn't work" (INQUIRER, 5/26/07), the land reform program was blamed for the sorry state of Philippine agriculture and for rural-to-urban migration.

Land reform is not to blame because it has not yet been adequately implemented. Less than one-third of the total number of the country's landowners still own more than 80 percent of its agricultural land. A handful of wealthy families still own thousands upon thousands of hectares of land while millions of our countrymen and women remain landless.

A major factor in the decline of the agricultural sector is government neglect and corruption. Remember the funds for agriculture which mysteriously disappeared shortly before the 2004 elections?

Genuine land reform promotes the rights and welfare of farm laborers and their families. Farm laborers (those who farm land they do not own) are underpaid and overworked. They are forced to borrow money at excessive interest rates. Then they are unable to pay out their debts. Because they are at the mercy of wealthy landlords and loan sharks, they can lose their work and their homes at any moment.

Having his own land gives dignity to the farmer. He gains the opportunity to reap the fruits of his labor.

The Church recognizes the need for land reform, and the Vatican released in 1997 a document titled "Towards a Better Distribution of Land: the Challenge of Agrarian Reform." The government also recognizes this need, which is why we have a Department of Agrarian Reform.

Land reform makes economic sense. A farmer will be more motivated to cultivate the land if he owns it and if he has a greater share of its produce. On the other hand, wealthy landlords are able to cultivate only a fraction of the thousands of hectares that they own. So much productive land has been left idle.

Pursuing land reform does not mean that the country has to forego industrialization and tourism development. Some areas can be designated as industrial zones, others can be developed as tourist attractions, and still others as agricultural areas.

Land reform, industrialization and tourism development are all important for economic growth. Land reform is necessary to help our farmers get a fair share of economic gains.

—BRO. ROBERT JOHN ABADA, OFM,
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Abalos a decent man, deserves high court seat

THE INQUIRER IS NOTED FOR SENSATIONalizing and commercializing stories. So, it can not be fair in its news report. There is no basis, not even an iota of proof, for John Salamat to conclude in his letter that Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos has been partisan in his actions, decisions and pronouncements. (INQUIRER, 5/25/07)

Abalos became a Comelec chair because he is intelligent, competent, credible, principled and, obviously, he possesses all the qualifications required under the Constitution to be a chair of a constitutional body. His life story is worth emulating: a self-supporting newspaper boy, he became a public prosecutor, judge, mayor and finally Comelec chair.

It was known that as an opposition mayoral candidate in Mandaluyong during the Marcos regime, he won but was cheated and never allowed to sit as mayor. He was a well-loved mayor because, aside from his intelligence, he was a very helpful and humble person, treating all his constituents, whether rich or poor, alike. His house was always open to the public. It is no wonder that members of his family continue to be elected in Mandaluyong.

If you happen to attend birthday celebrations of the Abalos clan, you will be served food personally by the Comelec chair even if you are poor. All the accusations being leveled against him as head of the Comelec are unsubstantiated and are all hearsay. Media have painted a bad picture of the good and decent man named Benjamin Abalos Sr. Be with him even for a day, and talk with him, and you will find how unfairly he has been denigrated by media and the people who do not know him.

He deserves to be promoted as a Supreme Court justice because traditionally, most Comelec chairmen became Supreme Court justices.

—EVA YEBES,
topgun_beng@yahoo.com

A year after complaint, problem getting worse

I HAVE LIVED HERE IN LAS PIÑAS ALL MY life, and so has my family. We grew up with this city and I am proud to say that I am from Las Piñas. However, these past few years, I and most of my neighbors have noted the alarming rise in the crime rate in our immediate area.

At Jarn Road alone, all 11 homes have been robbed or broken into. For the past three years, our house alone has been burglarized four times. Several businesses in the immediate area have been robbed as well. But our local officials have not taken any action on this matter. How many more homes and businesses must suffer, or must the government wait for lives to be lost, before it addresses this problem?

What is the use of clean roads, adequate street lighting and impressive infrastructure when residents no longer feel safe in their own homes and have no faith in their police force? Residents now feel it has become necessary to just take matters into their own hands by investing in additional security, or by building higher walls around their homes, which means spending more money.

Is this the type of mentality the government wants to foster? If so, for what purpose does the local police presence serve? I request our local officials to take a quick and decisive action addressing this concern.

I aired this complaint about a year ago (INQUIRER, 9/21/06), and I would like to say what it led to. Several days after my letter was published, two police officers visited me. They asked me why I wrote the letter. I explained to them in detail the obvious reasons. Their only response: I failed to bring the matter to the attention of the proper police units in the area.

Thus in the year that has passed, aside from road improvements and new street lights in the area, my letter has come to nothing. The local elections are over, still nothing has been done. It has come to a point wherein I and several other residents are considering selling our property. In fact, one homeowner has posted a notice of their intention to sell their house here.

I would like to say that I am very reluctant to sell my home because I grew up here. I watched how Las Piñas grew from a small town into a thriving and prosperous community. If there is any way for me to stay and keep my home, I will. But I wish to start a family and so I cannot let my children live in a place that I do not feel is safe. I fear that my voice has fallen on deaf ears.

I am writing this letter as a last resort, and I hope that our local officials, especially our newly elected mayor, will hear my plea.

—JULIUS CASTAÑARES,
castanares_j@yahoo.com

Philippine society's shocking state of affairs

AS A FOREIGN VISITOR TO YOUR COUNTRY, I suppose it can be said that I have no right to comment on domestic politics and other issues—but I'll go ahead anyway.

The Philippines has an electoral process which would be laughable were it not for its shocking lack of respect for human life and the basic tenets of democracy.

I read that the police have declared that 102 of the killings since January are not election-related; I guess that's all right then. But the figures are appalling, and I wonder how murder can be so easily committed by people who, presumably, go to church just a few days later.

One of the most disturbing images I saw recently was a front-page photo of former Batangas governor Antonio Leviste. (INQUIRER, 5/23/07) Here was a man, who has admitted to shooting someone, being shown laughing together with his jailer. And how could a man in uniform, an agent of the criminal justice system be allowed to behave in such a way? And how could a confessed killer be allowed to check in and out of jail as if it were a hotel?

There seems to be no shame, no honor, no sense of responsibility in this society. And yet, the Philippines continues to portray itself on the international stage as some kind of bastion of democracy.

The reality is that—in spite of all the wonderful things this country has to offer—the corruption and lawlessness of this society are truly horrifying.

—BRYAN SCOTT,
bryansc7358@hotmail.com

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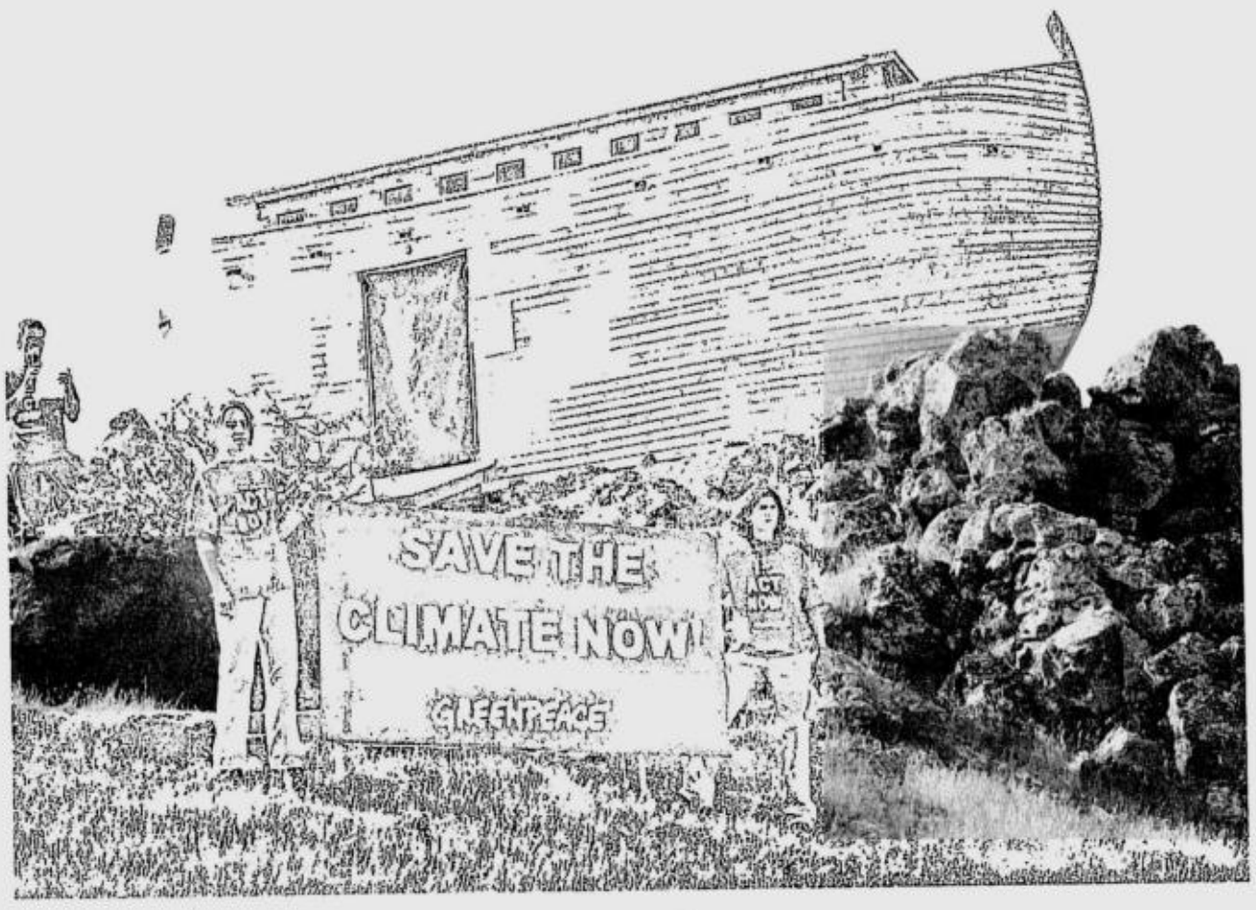

CLIMATE WARNING

Members of the environmentalist group Greenpeace display a replica of the biblical Noah's Ark to dramatize the urgency of stopping climate change. The Bible says God had Noah build the Ark to save himself, his family and a select group of animals from the Great Flood. PHOTO FROM GREENPEACE

Girl tagged as guerrilla died in crossfire—CHR

DAVAO CITY—THE COMMISsion on Human Rights has cleared the military of charges of murder and human rights violations for the death of Grecil Buya, the 9-year-old girl who was tagged by the military as a communist rebel immediately after her death during an armed encounter on March 31 in New Bataaan in Compostela Valley Province.

The decision, signed by CHR-Southern Mindanao director Alberto Sipaco, said the allegation that the 67th Infantry Battalion murdered and violated the rights of Grecil lacked merit.

After her death, Grecil's parents, Gregorio Galacio and Virginia, filed a murder complaint at the CHR against elements of 67th IB led by 2nd Lt. Francis John Gabawa.

"The complainant failed to provide substantial evidence ... the respondents were able to deny the allegations through counter-affidavits and countervailing evidence," Sipaco said in his decision, adding that the military did not commit human rights violations against Grecil because the girl was killed in a crossfire.

"The murder allegation may not find merit as there is no clear and convincing evidence that the victim was summarily executed. Neither was there a showing, substantial or otherwise, as to the existence of gross neglect as regards the protection of noncombants, more specifically children, on the part of the military," he said.

But the commission contradicted the statement of the military that Grecil was a child combatant, stressing that "the claim cannot be taken as gospel truth in the face of evidence to the contrary."

Sipaco also said that the only main in the case was whether or not Gabawa and his men shot Grecil. It, however, failed to point out who really shot the girl who was supposed to be on her third grade this school year.

In his counter-affidavit, Gabawa said it was the NPA who first shot at them and that they only "retaliated with the first burst of gunfire."

"The bullets that hit Grecil possibly came from the other side, not from the government forces for there was a cluster of lumber blocking or covering the place where the girl's body was found," Gabawa said.

The decision also stated that the death of Grecil, or any noncombatant, during legitimate encounters cannot be considered a violation of human rights, citing a case of alleged human rights violations in Luzon in 1998 where civilians were caught in a legitimate encounter between communist guerillas and government soldiers.

"The warring parties know the consequences of their actions but they cannot be held liable for the death of those caught in the crossfire in the absence of substantial evidence that there was gross negligence as regards the protection of noncombatants," the decision said.

The decision of CHR, meanwhile, has earned the criticism of groups who said they were dismayed by the resolution that they considered as CHR's way of passing the burden of proof to the victim and her family.

The Kabiba Alliance for Children's Concern in Mindanao also called the decision as something that "vindicated the human rights violators."

"Grecil as non-NPA combatant is a valid fact while CHR's conclusion as to the cause of her death that she died in a crossfire of a legitimate encounter is actually inconclusive because CHR did not actually employ scientific and defensible probing methods like the conduct of autopsy," said Honey May Suazo, Kabiba executive director.

"Civil society organizations working for children's rights are also discontented with the conduct of CHR investigation for it deliberately ignored the basic findings and recommendations of the National Interfaith Psycho-social First Aid Mission (NIPFAM) which include findings on the strafing of Galacio's house and recommendation for autopsy to ensure impartial and scientifically-grounded investigation," she said.

John Birondo, advocacy officer of Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC), called the decision absurd.

Jeffrey Tupas, Mindanao Bureau

Gov't hikes science, tech budget from ₱2.7B to ₱3.6B

BAGUIO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT HAS INcreased the budget of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) this year to P3.6 billion from P2.7 billion to finance more research development and scholarships for scientists.

"I do not know why the budget remained stagnant for a long period or who in the government had a lack of appreciation for science and technology," Undersecretary Fortunato de la Pena told a forum here on Tuesday.

"When you talk about science and technology, you talk about research and this may not be an urgent need for others who may see a need for more classrooms or medicines. But science and technology is long-term."

Aside from scholarships and research and development, the money will be used to fund small-scale enterprises and the upgrading of technological facilities of science institutions, he said.

He said a supplemental budget of P139 million was released this year to construct new buildings, classrooms and dormitories of the Philippine Science High School campuses and other science schools nationwide.

De la Peña said P500 million was also released to the University of the Philippines for the construction of a new science complex in its Diliman campus.

However, the primary focus of the DOST is to upgrade the knowledge of Filipino scientists by supporting more scholars, he said.

In February, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the release of P200 million to the Commission on Higher Education and DOST to finance more scholarships.

De la Peña said most scientists at the research and development institutes lack doctoral studies.

In other countries like Vietnam and Thailand, science institutions are packed with scientists who have their doctorates, he said, adding that research and development require a high level of science studies.

At present, the DOST has 150 science scholars who are taking their masters and doctoral studies. De la Pena said they plan to triple the number this year.

In 2010, the agency aims to produce 3,000 scholars.

De la Peña, however, lamented that the DOST is faced with the unabated exodus of Filipino scientists and science scholars. He said most scientists go abroad for higher salaries.

Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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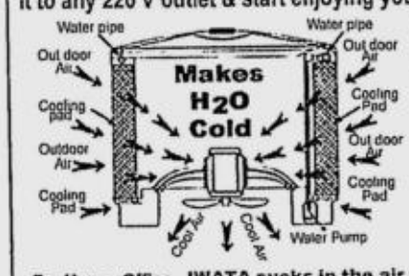

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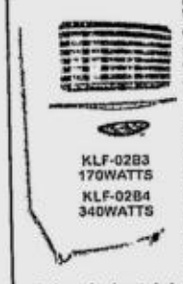

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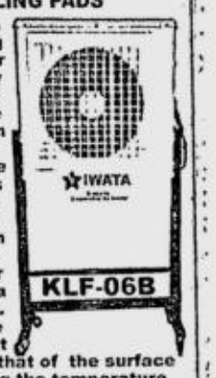

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PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF ENDOCRINOLOGY & METABOLISM

Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism(PSEM) Advisory on Rosiglitazone (AVANDIA) and Cardiovascular Risk - May 30, 2007

The recently published meta-analysis (a systematic review of data from different trials) entitled "Rosiglitazone on the Risk of Myocardial Infarction and Cardiovascular Causes" in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) dated May 21, 2007 concluded that "Rosiglitazone was associated with an increase in the risk of myocardial infarction". The Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism recognizes the alarm raised by this study among patients and physicians. However the study has its limitations and weaknesses as acknowledged by the authors and the editors of NEJM which warrants further investigation.

Two large long term clinical trials on Rosiglitazone the ADOPT (A Diabetes Outcome Progression Trial) and the DREAM (Diabetes Reduction Assessment with Ramipril and Rosiglitazone Medication) did not show a significant increase in cardiovascular risk. The ADOPT trial compared Rosiglitazone to Metformin and Glyburide in over 4300 patients with diabetes type 2 for up to 6 years. The DREAM followed up 5200 patients at high risk for type 2 diabetes for a period of 3 to 5 years compared to placebo.

An ongoing RECORD study (Rosiglitazone Evaluated for Cardiac Outcomes and Regulation of Glycemia in Diabetes) begun 4 years ago is powered to assess cardiovascular risk in 4500 patients with diabetes. So far no increase in cardiovascular risk has been seen. This study will be completed in 2008.

Pending the outcome of the RECORD study and independent reviews from regulatory bodies locally and abroad(Bureau of Food and Drug, US Food and Drug Administration), the PSEM recommends that the patient's continued use of Rosiglitazone be discussed with their respective physicians. Furthermore, physicians should strictly adhere to approved indications of Rosiglitazone and observe precautions in patients with established cardiac disease.

PSEM is committed to monitoring development on this issue and will assist its members and the general public by dissemination of information from authoritative sources as this becomes available.

FAMILIES of the disappeared gather for a prayer at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in Quezon City. RAFFY LERMA

Pastor held by cops tells court he was nabbed with no warrant

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BACOOR, CAVITE—TEN DAYS after unidentified armed men seized him a few meters outside their church in Biñan, Laguna, a Protestant pastor on Wednesday asked the regional trial court here to immediately order his release from jail, saying the issuance of the warrant for his arrest had no legal basis.

In his petition to conduct a preliminary investigation, Berlin Guerrero argued that the issuance of the warrant for a murder case issued 18 years ago was illegal since the prosecutor's office failed to hold any preliminary hearing regarding the case.

Relatives, colleagues and friends of Guerrero were present at the 8:30 a.m. hearing yesterday to show their support for Guerrero.

The pastor was taken by armed men shortly after attending a worship service on May 27.

After almost a day of being held incommunicado, Guerrero called up his wife and told her that he was being held at the Cavite police headquarters in Camp Pantaleon Garcia in Imus town in Cavite.

"We're confident that Pastor Berlin would be released soon because we have enough [pieces of evidence] to show the court that my husband is a good man," Guerrero's wife Mylene told the INQUIRER.

Represented by lawyers Emilio Capulong and Evelyn Dominguez, Guerrero also asked Judge Matias Garcia of Branch 19 of the Bacoor RTC to annul the warrant of arrest.

During the hearing, which lasted for just a few minutes, Garcia ordered the prosecution panel to file its comment on Guerrero's motion in five days.

Garcia also postponed Guerrero's arraignment on Friday pending the results of the motion filed by the pastor's lawyers.

Guerrero, 42, said he was happy that the court gave him an opportunity to defend himself.

"I now have the chance to prove that these age-old cases against me were just trumped-up charges," he said from his cell at Camp Pantaleon Garcia.

Capulong said that aside from its failure to do a preliminary hearing, the prosecutor's office also did not have witnesses to prove their allegations against Guerrero.

"What the prosecutors have are invisible witnesses. If they have no witnesses or [pieces of] evidence against the pastor, it's just right for the court to quash the warrant," Capulong told the INQUIRER.

Capulong said the torture that Guerrero's captors allegedly used to extract information from his client was a clear ground for the court to deem the arrest illegal.

A copy of the warrant showed that Guerrero allegedly killed a certain Noli Yatco in Cavite in 1990.

Cavite police chief Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas admitted that he did not have any idea regarding the murder charge.

Guerrero also had an arrest warrant for a case of inciting to sedition in Biñan.

He said he could not remember being charged with any murder case in Cavite.

In a statement e-mailed to media organizations after his May 27 "arrest," Guerrero said he was accused of being the secretary of the provincial committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines in Cavite.

"This lie they tried to extract from me by means of physical, mental and psychological torture and projecting me in public as a "hand-gun and grenade carrying rebel," Guerrero said.

He said he was brought to a place he did not know and that he was still handcuffed when men took turns interrogating and beating his head with their fists and blunt objects.

"All throughout, layers of plastic bags covered my head. My torturers would tighten the bag until I could no longer breathe. I passed out two times and urinated in my pants," he said in his account.

Guerrero said the men opened his computer and forced him to give the password, got his e-mail password, erased all of his church, school and personal files, and replaced it with documents that belonged to the so-called underground left.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
Tels. 891-7601 to 24 Fax: 833-0187
Website: www.owwa.gov.ph

OWWA PDOS ADVISORY NO. 01 SERIES OF 2007

ATTENTION: ALL PDOS PROVIDERS AND TRAINORS

SUBJECT: POLICIES AND GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE NEW LIST OF ACCREDITED PDOS PROVIDERS AND TRAINORS

This is to inform all concerned that starting June 15, 2007 only those PDOS Providers and Trainors who officially re-registered with OWWA last December 2006 will be recognized as officially registered Providers and Trainors.

OWWA and POEA will no longer honor the PDOS certificates of those not included in the attached list. Same list be posted at all POEA and OWWA offices.

A. **Validity of Accreditation**

The accreditation of all Trainors and Providers shall be for two (2) years. Afterwhich, everyone will be required to renew their registration at OWWA three (3) months before the expiration of their accreditation

Renewal of registration shall be based on:
1. Track record as provider/ trainor
2. Attendance to training/ refresher courses required by OWWA

B. **Reporting and Evaluation**

All PDOS Providers are also being reminded to adopt the PDOS Report Forms prescribed by OWWA and to submit their reports promptly within the first seven (7) days each month;

C. **REVOCATION OF REGISTRATION**

Non-cooperation of PDOS Providers or non- compliance of PDOS Providers/ Trainors to this advisory or to any improvements required by the OWWA-PDOS Team, after a month from receipt of corresponding notice, shall cause the revocation of registration at OWWA. The same shall be reported accordingly to POEA for appropriate action.

This Memorandum of Instruction shall take effect immediately.

MARIANITO D. ROQUE
Administrator

RE-REGISTRATION ACCREDITED TRAINORS NGOs/INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS/COUNTRY SPECIFIC

NAME OF PDOS TRAINOR

001 Anunciacion, Roy
002 Asis, Merry Chris E.
003 Balunos, Noemi H.
004 Barcelon, Shiela S.
005 Bellosilo, Haydee G
006 Bunga, Mohammad
007 Calderon, Luther Z.
008 Caye, Fatima Emma T.
009 Cazin, Aurora C.
010 Chan, Jezebelle P.
011 de Guzman, Mercedes
012 Dormiendo, Rizaline O.
013 Espinosa, Geraldine S.
014 Factor, Evangeline D.
015 Guimbal, Glenon L.
016 Herdiano, Ferdinand G
017 Hernandez, Hernalyn A
018 Hizon, Estrelita S
019 Intia, Celeste V.
020 Josue, Emmanuel L.
021 Kashim, H. Mardiyah Palma
022 Kobayashi, Marilou B.
023 Langara, Rosanna D.
024 Llanto, Johnny M.
025 Madi, Manette L
026 Malunes, Susan
027 Manalo, Ma. Victoria G
028 Martin, Nieves A.
029 Mowder, Lizette S
030 Muncada, Juvy P.
031 Ofalza, Janice M.
032 Pascual, Micteide B.
033 Ramirez, Nelson P.
034 Salazar, Julio M.
035 Tonog, Felix
036 Tribulete, Celsa F.
037 Vijandre, Santos M. Jr

RE-REGISTRATION ACCREDITED TRAINOR/ S & PDOS PROVIDER-LANDBASED

NAME OF PDOS TRAINOR

001 Amoroso, Daniel
002 Almazora, Annabelle L.
003 Arcilla, Allyn Rose G.
004 Bagatsing, Dahlia L.
005 Beltran, Irma SA
006 Bernabe, Angel Randy S.
007 Cabarloc, George A.
008 Calimag, Lorna M.
009 Cataag, Gloria M.
010 Cruz, Adriano C.
011 Cruz, Joey P.
012 Danganan, Yolanda
013 de Ocampo, Leonardo B.
014 de Ocampo, Rosalinda R.
015 Esguerra, Lawrence A
016 Estola, Manuel A.
017 Fausto, Andre Jose G.
018 Franco, Arlene C.
019 Franco, Maribet Theresa N.
020 Go, Elyse Wynne C.
021 Gonzales, Sylvia P.
022 Manalo, Ma. Christine S.
023 Nario, Edwin Cruz
024 Norvilla, Mohammad-Nur Celso C.
025 Pajarillaga, Erlinda R.
026 Pamittan, Joseph Manuel P.
027 Serrano, Marianito E.
028 Tawasil, Said A.
029 Ursolino, Romeo E.
030 Villanueva, Susana P
031 Viloria, Ricardo P.
032 Virtus, Susana A.

OWWA - PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION SEMINAR RE-REGISTRATION ACCREDITED TRAINORS-SEABASED

NAME OF PDOS TRAINOR

001 Abarca, Stella T.
002 Abilo, Alexander G
003 Abilo, Rosario Elena L Yap
004 Abundo, Rosemarie
005 Acenas, Danilo I.
006 Agbayani, Milagros Lim
007 Agomaa, Victoria C.
008 Aguillon, Antonio F.
009 Almodiel, Gloria N.
010 Alvaro, Andres F
011 Anacay, Teofilo O.
012 Anay, Christine L.
013 Ancheta, Regulus M.
014 Andaya, Eddie D.
015 Angeles, Alfredo C. Melchor
016 Aquino, Jaime C
017 Arcellana, Ma. Paz Francisca V
018 Aris, Roberto P.
019 Aspillaga, Rodolfo A
020 Atienza, Lou A.
021 Ballega, Happy A.
022 Basilio, Rufino A Jr
023 Bata, Wilfredo C.
024 Bautista, Carlos Miguel Y
025 Bernal, Reynaldo B
026 Besinio, Jimmy C.
027 Bigornia, Norman Y
028 Biliran, Glenda P.
029 Billones, Ireneo G
043 Castellon, Malvar T.
044 Castro, Eduardo A.
045 Catahan, Angelito P.
046 Catly, Leonides T.
047 Chico, Marcos S
048 Cordova, Aurelio A.
049 Cruz, Cecilia R.
050 Dango, Isidro C.
051 Dayo, Vicente A.
052 de Guzman, Catherine S.
053 de Guzman, Ricardo M
054 de Leon, July R
055 de Ramos, Cecilia M.
056 de Villa, Ma. Cecilio D
057 del Pilar, Jose
058 dela Cruz, Bernie R.
059 dela Cruz, Florante M
060 dela Peña, Macario E.
061 Detera, Azucena C
062 Diaz, Eleazar G.
063 Dormiendo, Rizaline O.
064 Durana, Johanna B.
065 Elemento, Felipe M.
066 Esber, Julito S
067 Esta, Victorio Q
068 Estrada, Lorenzo A II
069 Estrada, Percival D
070 Evangelio, Josefino A
071 Fajelagutan, Daniel

TERESITA Edulsa cries over the coffin of her husband, Niceforo, a Filipino working for the US government who was killed in a rocket attack on Iraq's heavily fortified Green Zone at the arrival area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Tuesday. JESS YUSON

Number of RP workers leaving for abroad via Cebu increasing

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE NUMBER OF overseas workers that left Cebu increased by 9.68 percent from January to April compared to the same period last year.

Evelia Durato, officer-in-charge of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in Cebu, said the increase in the number of workers seeking greener pasture abroad should not necessarily be attributed to poverty.

She said many simply wanted to improve their living conditions and have a more comfortable life.

"I think the main reason for people in working abroad is to meet (a certain) standard of living and to provide the basic needs to their family—shelter and education," she said.

Higher figures

From January to April, the POEA has recorded 8,903 persons who left for work abroad via the Mactan-Cebu International Airport.

The figure was higher compared to the 8,117 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who were recorded to have left for abroad through the MCIA in the same period last year.

The OFWs who left through the MCIA are not just from Cebu but also from other parts of the country that used Cebu as their departure point, Durato said.

The highest number of workers who left was recorded in January, reaching 3,229, Durato said.

This is not surprising because most OFWs who went home during the Christmas season would usually renew their contracts in January, she said.

Durato said 1,927 OFWs left via Cebu in February, 1,537 in March, and 2,210 in April.

She said the departing OFWs were skilled workers, domestic helpers, factory workers and professionals like Information Technology graduates and nurses.

Top destinations

The top destinations are countries in the Middle East, such as the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

In April alone, at least 435 OFWs departed for the UAE through the MCIA, she said.

Durato said there were even a few who were headed for Lebanon despite the war that erupted in that country last year.

Many of those who went to Lebanon were domestic helpers that were lured to work in that country because employers there usually pay at least 400 US dollars a month, she said.

Other destinations are Hong Kong and Singapore, and countries in Europe, such as Ireland and the United Kingdom, she said.

INQUIRER *Southern Luzon*

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/regions
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

"FLORES de Mayo" in acrylic by Irma Lacorte CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'We wanted the tourists not just to look for a place to eat and have a view of the volcano. We also want them to crave for the arts'

Group seeks to evolve art scene in Tagaytay

By Niña Catherine Calleja
Tagaytay City

ALTHOUGH ALREADY KNOWN AS A TOURIST spot because of the Taal Volcano and the cool weather, Tagaytay City as an art venue was still a distant dream, according to eight Cavite-based artists.

Collectively called the Grupo Ocho, the artists aim to introduce and cultivate visual art in the city.

Formed three months ago, Grupo Ocho has been conducting a series of group and solo exhibits in cafés and restaurants in Tagaytay since April.

"We are taking the opportunity for this city to become a tourist spot as there is a big possibility that the tourists and the local residents could be our audience," said Irma Lacorte, one of the artists. Other members are Elvin Santiago, Lirio Salvador Chrisanta, Bokeng, Lito Mondejar, Henry Cainglet and Ed Raymundo.

"We wanted the tourists not just to look for a place to eat and to have a view of the volcano. We also want them to crave for the arts," Lacorte said.

With their paintings, photographs and sculpture, the artists launched their first group exhibit on April 14. With the theme "Green Day," the exhibit highlighted culture as an important factor in "the province's greenery and scenic beauty."

Ten works from each artist were showcased in the exhibit, emphasizing diversity, Lacorte said.

'Farming in a forest'

"Creating an art scene here is like farming in a forest. You really must have patience from the start," she said.

"Perhaps, something could really happen for this project in the future," Lacorte said, noting that the city government was supporting their work. "Politicians here welcome us and offer us some help. But we know that it is the least of their priority."

Some popular restaurants are collaborating with Grupo Ocho for its group and solo exhibits.

Lacorte said the artists had to be resourceful and persevering. Before the exhibit, invitations had been sent out to friends and even strangers to drop by the restaurants.

The group has conducted two exhibits where they incorporated concerts and poetry reading to widen the audience, Lacorte said.

"We want to catch the attention, not only of art collectors but also of those who are interested in music and poetry," she added.

Lacorte said the group had to think of a strategy to establish a market for their works.

Flores de Mayo

On May 5, Lacorte launched her first solo at Gourmet Café with the theme "Flores de Mayo" (Flowers of May).

Her works usually deal with gender issues, but now, she tried to tackle light subjects in her paintings.

"I attempted to create intuitive paintings where there is an abstraction. I also wanted to create my own language through images," she said.

Dedicated to her mother Flores, the majority of the images in her works exuded the semblance of flowers.

"My focus in this exhibit is to sell the work to the people here," she said.

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• BRAND MANAGEMENT — June 18 - 29, 2007 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• COUNSELING AT WORK — June 19 - 28, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
• EFFECTIVE COLLECTION - HOW IT WORKS — June 19 - 28, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
• DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT — June 19 - 28, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
• ACCOUNTING FOR NON-ACCOUNTANTS — June 16 - July 14, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• EXPORT BUSINESS — June 16 - July 7, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• HOW TO START, FINANCE AND MANAGE A BUSINESS — June 16 - July 7, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEM EMPLOYEES — June 16, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• WRITING THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING — June 16, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• ELECTRICAL LAYOUT AND ESTIMATES — June 23 - July 7, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• FINANCING SMALL BUSINESS — June 23, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• EFFECTIVE VEHICLE MANAGEMENT — June 17 - July 8, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL CONTROL — June 17 - July 8, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT — June 17 - July 8, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
• DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TRAINERS — June 17 - July 1, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• CREATIVE SALESMANSHIP AND CLIENT RELATIONS — June 17 - July 1, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• HOW TO ORGANIZE & MANAGE A PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE — June 17 - July 1, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT — June 22, 2007 Friday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• EXPORT COSTING, PRICING AND CAPITAL COMPUTATION — June 23, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN

DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
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4.0mm	908	1,822	2,158	683	1,370	1,612	1,596	3,187	3,780
6.0mm	1,486	2,966	3,521	1,113	2,226	2,640	2,599	5,192	6,158
8.0mm	1,832	3,657	4,346	1,029	2,058	2,434	2,987	5,975	7,088
10.0mm	2,073	4,140	4,916	1,162	2,324	2,762	3,386	6,773	8,043
12.0mm	2,736	5,466	6,489	1,534	3,068	3,645	4,467	8,935	10,615

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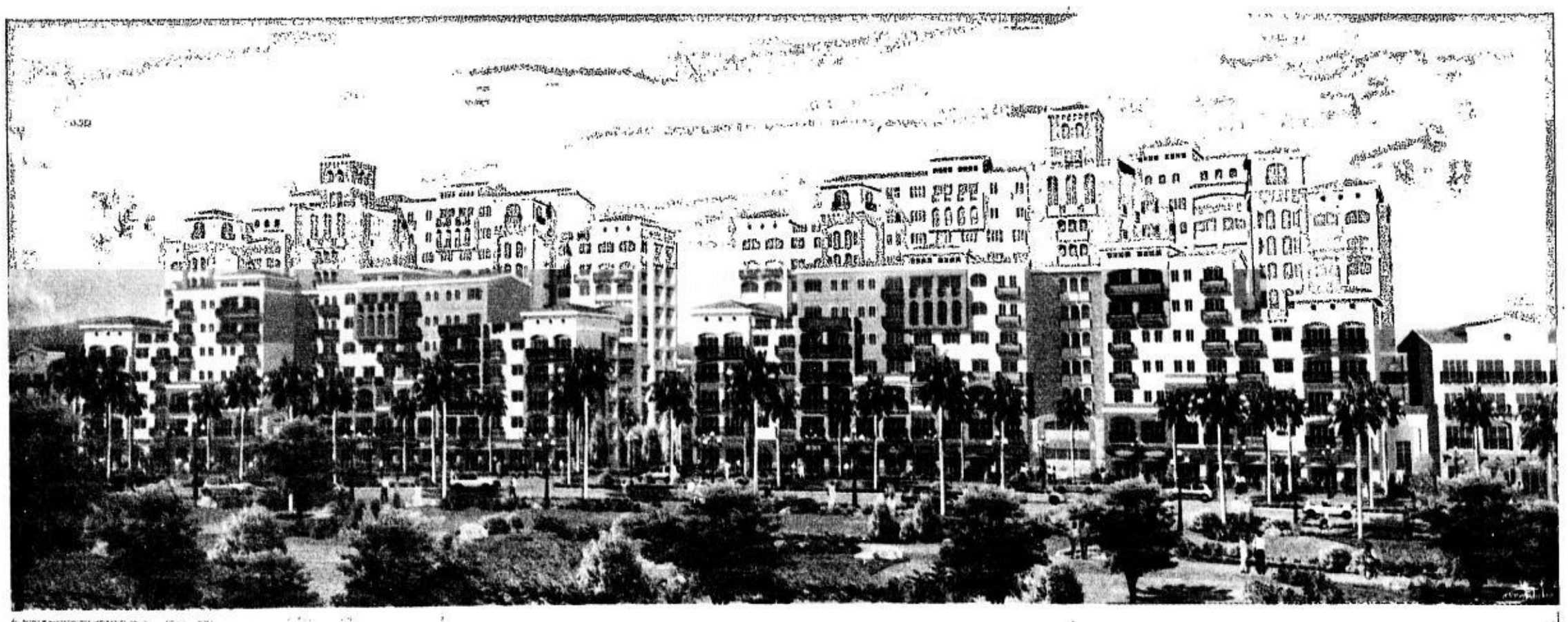

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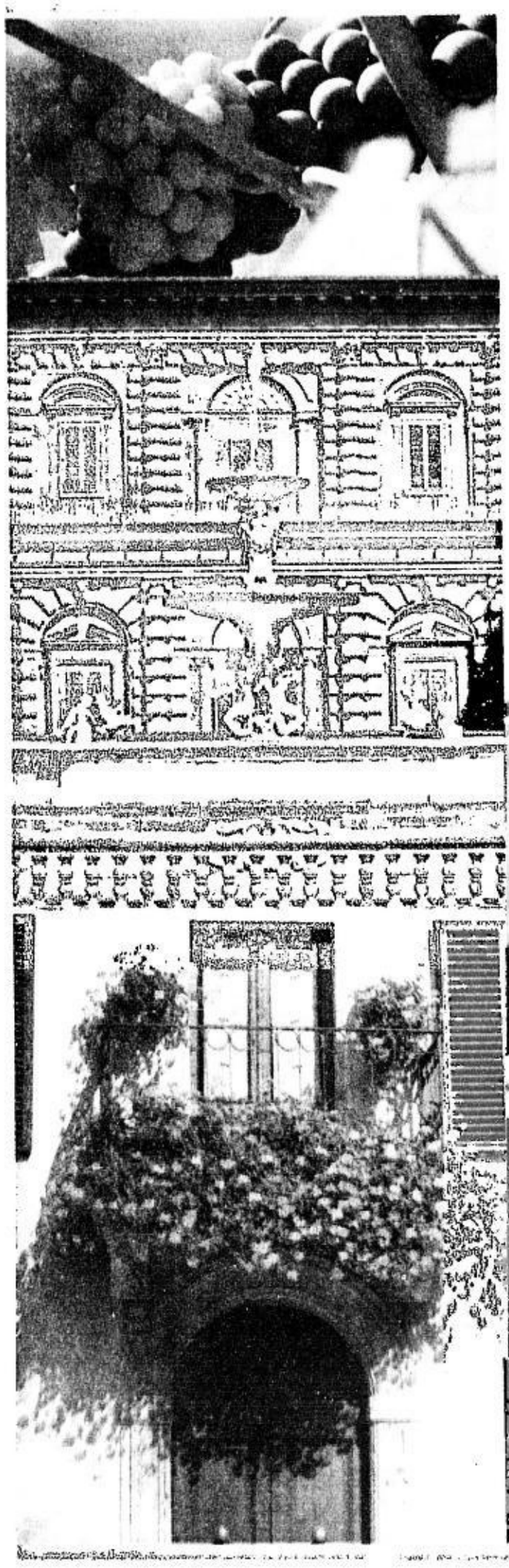

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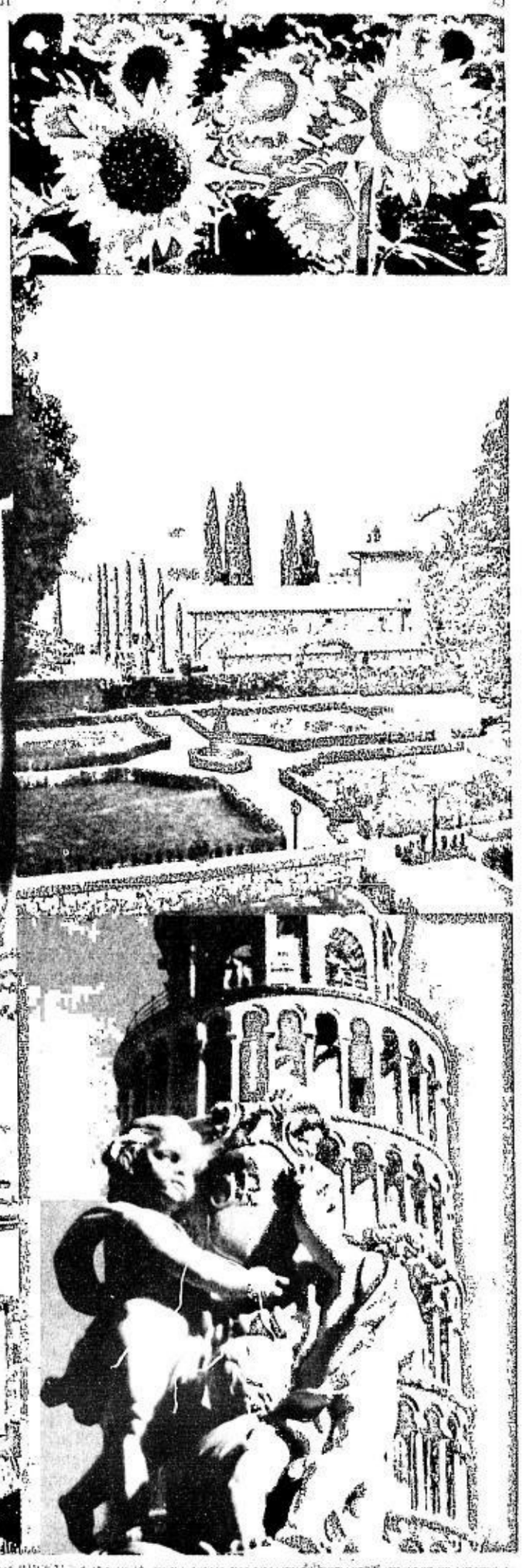

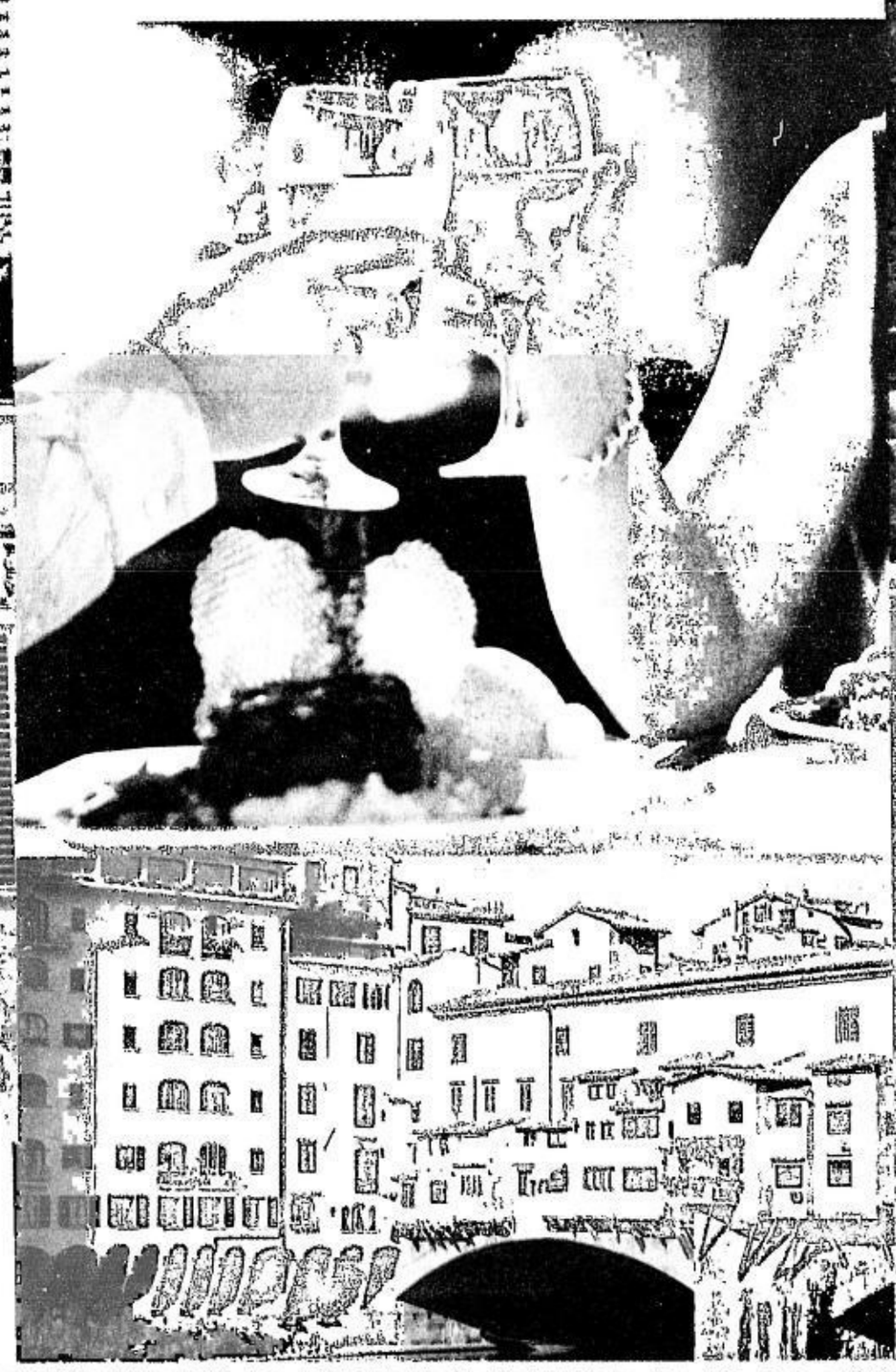

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Jimenez faces kidnap raps

Former solon claims wife just after money

By Leila B. Salaverria and Julie M. Aurelio

CAROLINE CASTAÑEDA, estranged wife of Mark Jimenez, yesterday filed charges of kidnapping, serious illegal detention and grave coercion against the former Manila congressman and several others at the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Castañeda was rescued by National Bureau of Investigation agents from Silvercrest Foundation, a drug rehabilitation center owned by Diana Crespo, Jimenez's niece, in Las Piñas, on May 25.

According to her lawyer, Lorna Kapunan, Castañeda was kidnapped by several men from the Makati Tuscany Condominium on May 16 and held against her will at the rehab facility upon Jimenez's orders. Saying she was not a drug user as her husband had alleged, Castañeda said she was mentally tortured and "treated worse than a convicted felon" at Silvercrest.

"Throughout my ordeal at Silvercrest, I was exposed to very horrible conditions; I was locked up and kept incommunicado, treated worse than a convicted felon, which I am not; I was exposed to mental torture by Mark Jimenez with the

JIMENEZ/ A18

CAROLINE Castañeda leaves the Department of Justice shortly after filing criminal charges yesterday against her husband, former Manila congressman Mark Jimenez. REM ZAMORA

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Rizal town's new facility turns Metro garbage to fuel

By DJ Yap

FOR THIS SLEEPY TOWN EAST OF Manila, garbage is power.

The municipality of Rodriguez, Rizal has jumpstarted an ambitious P1.5 billion project to extract methane gas from the Rodriguez landfill and churn out electricity enough to power 15,000 homes.

In what could be the first of its kind in Asia, the "Rodriguez Landfill Methane Recovery and Electricity Generation Project" is projected to produce 15 megawatts of power over a period of 10 years starting January 2008.

For Rodriguez Mayor-elect Pedro Cuerpo, the project is not just an environment-friendly solution to the energy crisis, it is also sweet vindication.

"Nobody wanted the garbage (from Metro Manila) except us. Now, it's the garbage that others did not want which can help steer our town to progress," he said at a press conference yesterday in Makati City.

At the height of the garbage crisis in 2001, Cuerpo drew strong opposition from various sectors for opening the town to nearly 30 percent of Metro Manila's 10,000 ton-a-day solid wastes.

"My fellow mayors said I was crazy, but I knew there was a proper abandonment program for the landfill and I just had to find it," the mayor added. Even the town priest would criticize him in his sermons, Cuerpo said.

Three days ago, the mayor signed a tripartite agreement with major stakeholders for the project, including representatives from the Rizal provincial government and Swims International, which operates the landfill.

Under the build, own and operate program, the Montalban Methane Power Corp. (MMPC) will invest P1.5 billion in the project intended to capture landfill gas from the 14-hectare facility to produce electricity.

Under the agreement, 90 percent of the gross revenues from the project will go to MMPC, while the remaining 10 percent will be split among the developers, Rodriguez town and Rizal province.

The town stands to gain millions from the agreement, Cuerpo said, adding that the income will go to better services for the populace.

MMPC president Peregrino Fernandez Jr. said the project would put the Philippines at the forefront of waste-to-energy production in Asia.

"We are a step ahead of China, which has yet to build its methane power plant at a landfill in Shanghai," he added.

Manila residents sue Atienza

By Allison W. Lopez

A GROUP OF MANILA RESIDENTS YESTERday filed a class suit against outgoing City Mayor Lito Atienza for closing a portion of Rizal Avenue in Sta. Cruz to vehicular traffic since 2003.

Vladimir Cabigao, Edgardo Valeza, Edgardo Cataquiz, Ricky Sunga, Ernesto "Boy" Santos and Freddie Aguilar (not the musician) said they were filing the case "in behalf of Manileños."

"What Atienza did was wrong. Rizal Avenue is a national road. He only has authority over local streets," Cabigao, a lawyer, said.

In their complaint filed at the Manila Regional Trial Court, the six said a resolution, instead of an ordinance, was used as the basis for closing down the road from the corner of Claro M. Recto Avenue to Carriedo Street.

They cited Section 21 of the Local Government Code of 1991 on Closure and Opening of Roads which states that "a local government unit may, pursuant to an ordinance, permanently or temporarily close any local road, alley, park or square falling within its jurisdiction."

The INQUIRER tried to get Atienza's side, but calls to his cell phone went unanswered.

Manila legal officer Melchor Monsod, however, said that although Rizal Avenue was a national road, it was "not actually closed" because pedestrians could still use it. "We did not change the character of the road. It's still a national road. We did not convert it into a city road," he added.

Mayor-elect Alfredo Lim has promised to reopen the closed portion of Rizal Avenue when he assumes office next month.

Manila Water Service Upgrade in Cainta, Taytay, Angono

Manila Water will conduct service improvement project in Cainta, Taytay, Angono which will cause low pressure to temporary water supply interruption.

Schedule: 12:01 a.m. to 4:00 a.m., Friday, June 8, 2007

Areas Affected:

- Cainta, Taytay, Angono

Activity : Dry-run of the closing of a 600-mm in diameter pipe along Ortigas Avenue for the interconnection of Mega Project.

We therefore advise all affected residents to store enough water for their needs during the interruption.

For updates, please call our Customer Service Hotline at 1627.

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Manila Water

These service improvement projects are necessary to ensure safe and reliable water supply for our East Zone customers.

(PDI – June 7, 2007)

German exec hurt in Ermita ambush

By Tina G. Santos

A MANILA policeman inspects the car Michael Johannes Heinen was driving when he was ambushed. REM ZAMORA

A 63-YEAR-OLD GERMAN BUSINESSman was seriously hurt after he was ambushed by motorcycle-riding suspects in Manila at 8:30 a.m. yesterday as he was about to get out of his car.

Michael Johannes Heinen, chair of Propeller Foundation-Maritime Science and Technology Resources (Profound Master), a seamen training center, was still confined at press time in the Philippine General Hospital for gunshot wounds.

Investigation showed that the victim, a resident of Generic Condominium on E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City, had just parked his vehicle on Escoda Street in Ermita when two men got off a motorcycle and walked towards him. One of the suspects approached Heinen, who was still seated in his car, and shot him, hitting him in the shoulder and armpit.

Police said the victim has been in the country since 1994 as chair of Profound Masters Inc., which conducts seminars for seamen.

Investigators are looking into the possibility that the attack may have something to do with the victim's business.

An investigator who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to talk to media said they learned that the victim was the star witness in Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico's expose regarding alleged anomalies surrounding the P800 million loan for the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy in San Narciso, Zambales.

"That's another angle we're now looking at," police said. *With Joanne Gonzales*

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

Pursuant to Section 1, Rules 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009), as amended, the public is hereby invited to the panel interview at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building, of the following candidates for the two positions of ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS vacated by Hon. Roberto A. Barrios and Hon. Elvi John S. Asuncion:

JUNE 18, 2007, MONDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. ACUÑA, EDMUNDO T.
2. ALHAMBRA, REYNALDO A.
3. ALIM, ROSE MARY M.
4. APURILLO, SALVADOR Y.
5. ARLES, HENRY D.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. AYSON, RUBEN C.
2. AZARRAGA, JULIANA DC.
3. BAGALACSA, LORE V.
4. BALONZO, FREDDIE D.

JUNE 19, 2007, TUESDAY
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. BARCELONA, MANUEL C. III
2. BARRIOS, MANUEL M.
3. BAY, TEODORO A.
4. BENDIGO, RAUL B.
5. BERNARDO, OSCAR B.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. BISQUERA, JOE SANTOS B.
2. BORRETA, ABRAHAM B.
3. CARANDANG, MELCHOR ARTHUR H.
4. CORREA, LIBRADO S.

JUNE 20, 2007, WEDNESDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. CRUZ, RAMON A.
2. CUEVA, EULOGIA M.
3. DE CASTRO, SEVERINO B. JR.
4. DE LOS SANTOS, EDGARDO L.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. DIAMANTE, FRANCHITO N.
2. DUMDUM, SIMEON P. JR.
3. ERUM, BERNARDITA G.
4. ESCOBINO, JOSE L.

JUNE 21, 2007, THURSDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. FRANCISCO, RAYMUNDO T.
2. FRUELDA, CARMELITA G.
3. GERONIMO, ISAGANI A.
4. GRULLA, CIELITO M.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. GUILLEN, MARISSA M.
2. HERRERA, OSCAR C. JR.
3. INFANTE, AMELIA T.
4. INOTURAN, NAPOLEON E.

JUNE 25, 2007, MONDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. INTING, SOCORRO B.
2. KALLOS, ROBERT E.
3. LACAP, MERCEDES P.
4. LAGOS, RAFAEL R.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. LAQUINDANUM, LILY LYDIA A.
2. LAZARO-JAVIER, AMY C.
3. LLOREN, EDGARDO T.
4. LOPEZ, ROMULO A.

JUNE 26, 2007, TUESDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. MACALINO, FLORITO S.
2. MADRONA, FORTUNITO L.
3. MARAMBA, JOVEN M.
4. MAYO, MANUEL A.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. MEDINA, ADELAIDA A.
2. MUÑEZ, RENATO D.
3. PACURIBOT, JERRY M.
4. PAREDES, VICTORIA ISABEL A.

JUNE 27, 2007, WEDNESDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. PATRICIO, ROGER B.
2. PE-AGUIRRE, THELMA C.
3. PERALTA, EDUARDO B. JR.
4. PERALATA, WILLIAM SIMON P.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. PERAS, SOLIVER C.
2. PONFERRADA, THELMA A.
3. QUERUBIN, PERLA B.
4. REGALA, LEAH D.

JUNE 28, 2007, THURSDAY
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. REYES, AMOR A.
2. SADAIN, MEHOL A.
3. SALUDARES, REYNALDO L.
4. SITACA, NIMFA P.

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
1. SORIAO, PEDRO R.
2. SORONGON, EDWIN D.
3. TANGUANCO, EDUARDO I.
4. VILLASOR, EDWIN A.

June 06, 2007

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI–June 7, 2007)

Jimenez faces kidnap raps

From page A17

willing assistance of his niece, Diana Crespo. It is the greatest irony that my detention should come at the hands of a convicted felon like Mark Jimenez," she said in a press conference held after she filed the case at the DOJ.

Charged along with Jimenez were Crespo, lawyer Edgar Francisco and Rene dos Remedios.

According to Castañeda, she was detained to prevent her from testifying in the case she earlier filed against Jime-nez. She has asked a court to issue a permanent protection order against her husband whom she accused of physical, emotional and psychological abuse in the 30 years they spent together.

"I realize that Mark Jimenez always threatened me not to act because he is a very powerful man, with great wealth and powerful connections. He may be powerful, wealthy or well connected, but Mark Jimenez is not above the law; no one is," she said.

But Jimenez, in a statement issued through his lawyer, Frank Chavez, denied Castañeda's allegations, saying she was just after his money.

His claim appeared to be backed up by former presidential legal adviser, Harriet Demetriou, who said that Castañeda's camp was asking $10 million from the former congressman.

"Attorney Lorna Kapunan told me it was the amount her client wanted before reconciling with Mr. Jimenez. I said, 'P10 million?' She told me, 'No, its $10 million,'" Demetriou said in a press conference.

"Mark was very mad. He said, 'I don't want this kind of imposition for a settlement,'" she said.

Demetriou explained her involvement in the matter by saying that Jimenez had asked her help in seeking a reconciliation with his wife since she was a mutual friend of the couple.

Business profitable for illegal 'exporter'

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THAT INDIAN BUSINESSMAN WHO was reported to be engaged in underground lending and dollar salting in Binondo, Manila, has fled to Australia, according to my source at the Commission on Immigration.

The source said things became so hot in Manila for the businessman that he had to cool off in Australia.

But another Indian is allegedly into big-time smuggling, and his activities should be watched closely by the Bureau of Customs, a customs source said.

This Indian manufactures towels, blankets, pillow cases and bed sheets that are sold in big malls and department stores in the country.

The modus operandi of this foreigner entails importing raw materials from China that are to be exported back to their place of origin as finished products.

Since these raw materials are to be exported back to their source as finished products, taxes and duties are not imposed on them by the Bureau of Customs.

But, alas, the finished products are not exported but sold in the country. In the language of smugglers, this method is called "paper export" since no finished products leave the country.

At the end of every year, according to my little birdie, when it's time to liquidate his exported items, this businessman reportedly colludes with some personnel at the Bureau of Customs. They make it appear that he exported finished products out of the imported raw materials.

Because of this, the Indian allegedly receives a rebate from the Department of Finance in the form of a tax credit. Exporters are given tax credits by the government as incentive for earning dollars for the country. Tax credit certificates are issued by the Department of Finance.

This Indian not only evades paying taxes and duties on his imported goods, he also gets money from the government by claiming that it owes him tax credit.

This man allegedly sells his tax credit certificates to other Indian importers at 70 percent off.

* * *

The practice of making tax credit certificates transferable should be stopped.

Payment of tax credit certificates for income tax should only be granted to the exporter who was awarded by the government.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) has allowed the practice of making tax certificates transferable.

Thus, it is not surprising why the BIR consistently incurs a shortfall in collection because it is paid in tax credits by people who buy them.

* * *

An item in this column about the infighting in Buhay, the party-list that got the highest number of votes, has drawn a clarification from one of its representatives.

Maria Carissa Coscolluela, who belongs to the side of Rene Velarde, says she never worked with the Population Commission which distributes condoms and promotes vasectomy—activities that go against Buhay's advocacy.

Sen. Dick Gordon confirms Coscolluela's claim, saying she has been with him since the time he was chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority up to the present.

Coscolluela says she graduated from the Ateneo University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, by way of mentioning her qualifications. She spent three years of high school in Long Island, New York, and finished the course at the International School in Manila.

Pagcor worker hurt in explosion

By Tina G. Santos

AN EMPLOYEE OF THE PHILIPpine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) was slightly injured after a grenade under one of the tires of her vehicle exploded yesterday afternoon.

The police did not identify the victim, reportedly a slot machine attendant of the Pagcor casino at the Manila Pavilion Hotel on UN Avenue, Manila.

An initial investigation showed that the incident happened at around 2 p.m. at the Pagcor parking lot on T.M. Kalaw Street, near the National Library.

The police said the victim was seated in her Nissan X-Trail van when the grenade under the front left tire went off, leaving her injured in the leg.

"Hindi masyado malakas ang impact kasi sa ilalim ng gulong nilagay yung granada (The impact was not strong because the grenade was placed under the tire)," said an investigator, who declined to be named.

Two vehicles parked next to the victim's car suffered some damage, he added.

Pagcor security guards downplayed the incident, saying the explosion was caused by a flat tire.

DID YOU KNOW

THE PHILIPPINES' first FM stereo radio station, dzFX, went on air on May 31, 1968. The radio station's studio was located at the Insular Life building in Makati.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Fidel Castro mum about his return to power

HAVANA—A HEALTHY-LOOKing Cuban President Fidel Castro hinted that his recovery was still incomplete and talked politics in his first interview in 10 months, but he left unanswered the big question about his return to power.

"A human being's health is always facing threats, lurking dangers, but we've been doing all the things that needed to be done," said the 80-year-old Castro, who has been recovering in hospital since he underwent surgery and handed over power to his brother Raul on July 31.

CASTRO AP

"All I can tell my fellow countrymen is what I've already said, that I'm now doing what I have to do, nothing else. There's no secret. I can't put it more clearly," he told state-controlled Cuban television.

Castro said his health was being monitored closely, even by the United States. "They can check out anybody coming into the house with their satellites," Castro said.

"There's no state secret," he insisted, adding that in his recovery from what last year was said to be gastrointestinal surgery, he was eating "a much more balanced" diet.

A day after handing over power to his brother, Castro had said his health was a "state secret," triggering months of rumors about his return to power and Cuba's possible transition to a more open society.

Earlier this week, official media said Castro's interview would offer "other issues of interest," fueling speculation that he could announce his return to power.

However, Castro on Tuesday left unanswered the question on the mind of every Cuban, here and in Florida, letting lingering doubts persist about his plans for the future.

US Spanish-speaking television stations that were broadcasting Castro's interview live, broke off a half-hour into the program after it became apparent the leadership question would not be addressed.

The pre-recorded, hour-long interview with "Roundtable" anchorman Randy Alonso, Castro's first since he dropped from public view, dealt mainly with the hospital visit last weekend by Vietnamese Communist Party leader Nong Duc Manh.

The veteran Cuban leader also spoke about energy conservation, an issue close to his heart. *AFP*

Palestinians protest Israel's occupation

RAMALLAH—PALESTINIANS and peace activists rallied on Tuesday against four decades of Israeli occupation on the anniversary of the 1967 war that reshaped the Middle East in just six days.

President Mahmoud Abbas said the creation of a Palestinian state would expunge the memory of the crushing Arab defeat in the war that saw Israel wipe out three Arab armies and conquer vast swathes of territory.

"Despite all the difficulties ... our revolt was equal to this defeat, the memory of which we hope will be erased by ending the occupation of Arab and Palestinian territory and by establishing our independent state." He warned that factional clashes last month had left the Palestinians "on the verge of a civil war" and that dangers from the internal fighting were "equal to, if not greater, than that of the occupation."

In 1967, Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria and the Gaza Strip and Sinai peninsula from Egypt—an area more than three times bigger than the state of Israel at the time.

Jailed Palestinian intifada leader Marwan Barghuti called for a huge popular campaign against the occupation, saying its end was "the only option to open the way to peace in the Middle East."

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya of the Islamist movement Hamas in a statement called "on the whole world to stand behind the Palestinians and their legitimate rights which were eroded" by the occupation.

The 1967 war planted the seeds of the many deep-rooted obstacles that generations of diplomats have found impossible to untangle in their search for peace—from the Jewish settler movement to sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Weeks of regional belligerency and international brinkmanship saw Israel launch what it called a preemptive strike on June 5, 1967, smashing the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and securing its status as a regional superpower.

Marking the war on Tuesday, Palestinians staged a main rally in Ramallah, the political capital of the occupied West Bank, and further north in Nablus, where dozens marched toward an Israeli checkpoint, one of the most potent local symbols of occupation.

In the flashpoint city of Hebron, some 250 Israeli peace activists protested the continuing expansion of settlements in the Golan, the West Bank, and east Jerusalem, today home to nearly half a million settlers.

In a rally in the Anata neighborhood of east Jerusalem, speakers warned Israel that it will not have security until the occupation is ended and a Palestinian state created.

"The key word for peace and security is a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as the capital," Jibril Rajub, a senior member of Abbas's Fatah party, told the gathering of nearly 1,000 people.

During a simultaneous rally in Tel Aviv that attracted a few hundred people, organizers erected a duplicate of a checkpoint to bring home to Israelis the "reality" of the West Bank, which is dotted by more than 500 such roadblocks, impeding freedom of movement and feeding resentment.

"We have to bring the idea to the Israeli public that this occupation which has gone on for 40 years must end," said Susan Lourenco, one of the organizers.

Israeli police banned a Palestinian conference due to take place in east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians dream of making the capital of their promised future state but where all official Palestinian political activity is banned. *AFP*

Thailand allows political activities

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S MILITARY-backed government on Tuesday lifted a post-coup ban on political activities, paving the way for ousted Premier Thaksin Shinawatra's dissolved party to regroup.

The cabinet's decision to repeal an order imposed by the junta after it seized power from Thaksin last September will allow parties to begin preparations for elections tentatively set for December.

"The cabinet agreed for existing political parties and groups of politicians to carry out their political activities," government spokesperson Yongyuth Mayalarp told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

"This resolution is effective immediately." The move was welcomed by some members of Thailand's two main political parties, but other politicians and analysts warned obstacles remained that could prevent a level playing field in any upcoming polls.

"This is going to give a big advantage to the established parties who have not been banned, primarily the Democrat Party," Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, told AFP.

"Now they can go and campaign and talk to the voters and constituents, whereas Thai Rak Thai cannot yet talk to its 14 million constituents," he added, calling the move a "half-baked accommodation."

Last week, Thailand's Constitutional Tribunal dissolved Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party after finding it guilty of violating election regulations in polls in April 2006.

The court banned 111 senior party members, including the ousted premier, from politics for five years.

The Democrat Party, TRT's main political rivals, were cleared of similar vote fraud charges.

While Tuesday's move will allow former TRT members to begin regrouping and conducting activities, they will not be able to actually register their new party until a new law is passed by the junta-appointed parliament. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Japan's prince surgery

TOKYO—Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito successfully underwent surgery at a Tokyo hospital on Wednesday to remove a benign growth from his small intestine, the doctors treating him said. "The surgery was performed smoothly as planned and ended successfully," said palace physician Dr. Ichiro Kanazawa. "The crown prince woke up smoothly from the anesthetic and exchanged a few words with the crown princess, who was waiting inside his hospital room." Doctors at the University of Tokyo Hospital took two hours to remove the polyp in a noninvasive, endoscopic operation, according to Imperial Household Agency spokesperson Yasuo Moriyama. *AP*

21 sect members killed

NAIROBI—Kenyan police killed at least 21 suspected members of a banned sect in a Nairobi slum in retaliation for the killing of two officers, police and witnesses said on Tuesday. "Following the killing of two policemen, we launched an operation to recover the firearms that were stolen (from them) ... and 21 people who were resisting arrest were killed" overnight, said national police spokesperson Eric Kiraithe. "They are Mungiki members who started resisting arrest when police launched the operation to recover firearms," he said. The politically-linked Mungiki sect has been blamed for a wave of recent murders including several gruesome beheadings. *AFP*

11 dead in Aussie collision

KERANG, AUSTRALIA—At least 11 people were killed and dozens injured in Australia's worst rail crash in 30 years on Tuesday when a huge truck ploughed into a passenger train at a level crossing, police said. Witnesses reported the fully-laden truck slammed at high speed into the train, made up of an engine and three carriages, leaving "a big gaping hole" in the side of one carriage and almost derailing the others. "You just wonder how anybody got out," weeping survivor Sue Fyffe said. "People were sitting in seats with glass all over them. "All we could hear was people screaming and crying and moaning—it was just awful, devastating," she told Sky News. About 24 people were hurt, five seriously, police said. *AFP*

Diana's sons buck photo airing

LONDON—Princess Diana's sons William and Harry appealed on Tuesday to a British broadcaster not to air photos taken after her fatal 1997 car crash, terming the plan "gross disrespect" to her memory. But Channel 4, which plans to show a documentary "Diana: The Witnesses in the Tunnel" on Wednesday, immediately said it was going ahead with the broadcast. Royal officials said in a statement that they had written to Channel 4 asking them on behalf of the princes not to broadcast pictures taken after the crash in a Paris underpass on the night of Aug. 31, 1997. "The princes reluctantly feel that they have been left no choice but to make it clear publicly that they believe the broadcast of these photographs to be wholly inappropriate, deeply distressing to them and to the relatives of the others who died that night, and a gross disrespect to their mother's memory," said a statement by Clarence House. *AFP*

WHO warns of surge in drug-resistant TB

TUBERCULOSIS MAY reach the point where most new cases in some countries are resistant to many drugs unless far greater efforts are made now to stop the spread of the infection, World Health Organization officials said on Tuesday.

That chilling forecast is based in part on the organization's analyses showing that on average, a patient infected with drug-resistant tuberculosis in 2004 was resistant to more drugs than a similar patient with that diagnosis in 1994, Dr. Paul P. Nunn, a TB expert for the organization, said at a news conference.

The case of Andrew Speaker, the Atlanta man with extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis, who took commercial flights for his wedding in Greece and honeymoon in Europe and set off an international health scare, has focused attention on the disease, and prompted the news conference. *NYT*

Virginia Tech to reopen campus building on June 18

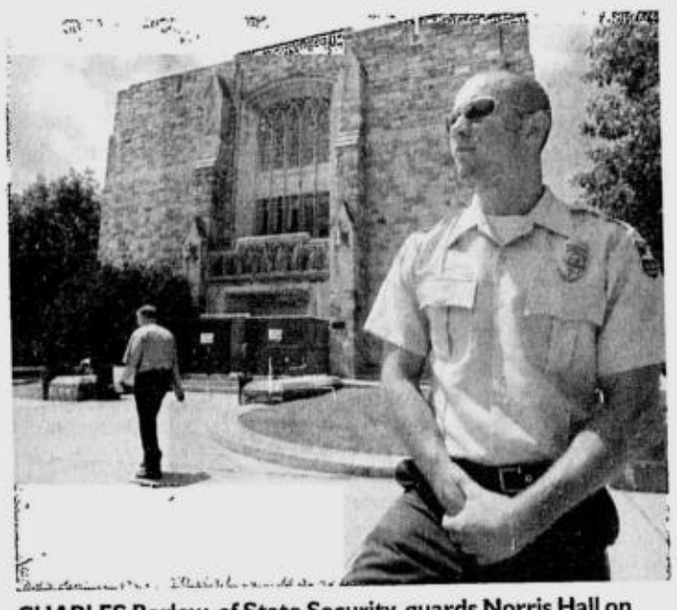
BLACKSBURG—THE BUILDing where a gunman killed 30 people and himself on the Virginia Tech campus will be reopened for offices and laboratories, but will never again be used for classrooms, the university announced on Tuesday.

Norris Hall will open June 18 for the engineering science and mechanics and civil and environmental engineering departments. They had been the primary occupants of the building on April 16, when Seung-Hui Cho, a South Korean immigrant, killed 32 students and faculty members on the Blacksburg campus before killing himself. Two victims were shot in a dormitory a few hours before the rest were attacked inside Norris Hall.

The second floor rooms where the shootings occurred will remain closed.

"That wing is going to be shut down completely," university spokesperson Larry Hincker said.

Following the shootings, dozens of faculty, students, alumni and others contacted the school with suggestions for use of the building, ranging from using it as classroom space to making it a memorial to knocking it down.


CHARLES Barlow, of State Security, guards Norris Hall on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va., on June 5. AP

"After considering all points of view that were offered, I determined the best course of action to enable the College of Engineering to continue its healing was to move forward with phased reuse of the building," university president Charles Steger said in a statement.

The College of Engineering was hit hardest in the attack, with 11 students and three professors killed. *AP*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
SMASH & SLAM MARKETING CO. LTD. 2326 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Shuizhi Wang	Marketing Manager
SMASH & SLAM MARKETING CO. LTD. 2326 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Zhengyang Sun	Consultant
SMASH & SLAM MARKETING CO. LTD. 2326 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Xiuqi Wang	Creative Manager
NAIADSS CORPORATION Pioneer St. cor. Sheridan St., Mandaluyong City	Bohyon Nam	Mechanical & Maintenance Supervisor
NAIADSS CORPORATION Pioneer St. cor. Sheridan St., Mandaluyong City	Wooyoung Lee	Mechanical Supervisor
SONG HWA SYSTEM PHIL. CORP. Rm. 406 Forosa Bldg., 2035 H.B. Harrison cor. Buendia, Pasay City	Chan Shik Jang	General Manager
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Johnny Kazuaki Hamamura	Project Consultant
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Arunrat Singmaneechai	Project Manager
DYCO 21 PHILS., INC. Andres Cmpd., F. Legaspi St., Maybunga, Pasig City	Junghyung Lee	Technical Assistant
TIGERWAY FACILITIES & RESOURCES INC. 433 R. Pascual St., Mandaluyong City	Jie Min	Consultant
UNILEVER PHILIPPINES, INC. 1351 U.N. Avenue, Manila	Dat Quoc Vu	Senior Brand Manager
HISOLOMON CORPORATION Mt. Apo Bldg., Victoria Wave Special Economic Zone, Bo. Malaria, Tala, Caloocan City	Kyungbok Shin	President
EON PHARMATEK INC. Unit 1903, Parc Chateau Condominium, Onyx St., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Sangeet Mehrotra	President
HIMACHAL TRADING CO. INC. 103 E. Flores St., Malibay, Pasay City	Kumari Vandana	General Manager
CEBU AIR, INC. Airport Road, Pasay City	David Pierre Edouard Sayag	Resident Customer Support Representative
IP E-GAME VENTURES INC. 34/F Tower 2 RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Shu Te Tsao a.k.a. Steve Tsao	President
SHANGHAI ORIENTAL TEXTILE CORPORATION 586 Cordillera St., cor. Arayat, Brgy. Hi-way Hills, Mandaluyong City	Sanjay Tekchandbhai Tolani	Supervisor
DOW CHEMICAL PACIFIC LTD. 23/F 6750 Building, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Dean Elbert Hadley	Process Engineering Associate
DOW CHEMICAL PACIFIC LTD. 23/F 6750 Building, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Adrian Olivares	Technical Advisor
ELIASCO PHILIPPINES INC. 5217 One Grande, Brgy. Ugong, Valenzuela City	Joseph Elias	General Manager
BESTON RICH MINERALS INC. Unit 2410 Sunview Palace Condo., M.H. del Pilar St., Ermita, Manila	Zilin Yang	Treasurer
TURTLESHIP TRADING CORP. M.S.B.F. Compound, Edsa cor. Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City	Jeongja Na (w/o CHO)	Managing Partner
A-WON'S AUTO SUPPLY CORPORATION 15 Diamond St., San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City	Woo Young Ha	Sales Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

In commemoration of the 109th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Philippine Independence, DOLE will hold a "Mega Job and Livelihood Fair" on June 12, 2007 at Rizal Park, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. For more information, call 3030364 / 3035922

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI June 7, 2007)

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US-Russia word war heating up

HEILIGENDAMM, GERMANY—US PRESIDENT George W. Bush criticized Russia on democracy on Tuesday but sought to calm President Vladimir Putin's anger over US missile shield plans on the eve of a G8 summit in Germany.

Speaking in Prague before heading to the Baltic coast resort of Heiligendamm for the meeting of major powers, Bush said Putin had nothing to fear from the shield, calling it a "purely defensive" measure.

"Russia is not our enemy," Bush said after meeting Czech leaders on a visit aimed at highlighting the country's emergence from Soviet domination.

He said he would urge Putin at the summit to cooperate with the US plan to deploy a radar system in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland, but later in a speech took a dig at Moscow's record on democracy.

"In Russia, reforms that once promised to empower citizens have been derailed, with troubling implications for democratic development," Bush said.

His comments are part of an escalating war of words between the former Cold War rivals which the German hosts fear could overshadow the June 6 to 8 summit of the so-called Group of Eight—Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

Putin has said if Washington pushes ahead with its plans to deploy the missile system, Russia will revert to targeting its missiles on Europe as it did during the Cold War.

His deputy spokesperson rejected Bush's comments on democracy on Tuesday, describing Russia as a "democratic state" that shared global and European values.

"On his statement about the rolling back of democratic reforms, we are convinced that the reality in Russia today demonstrates the opposite," Dmitry Peskov said.

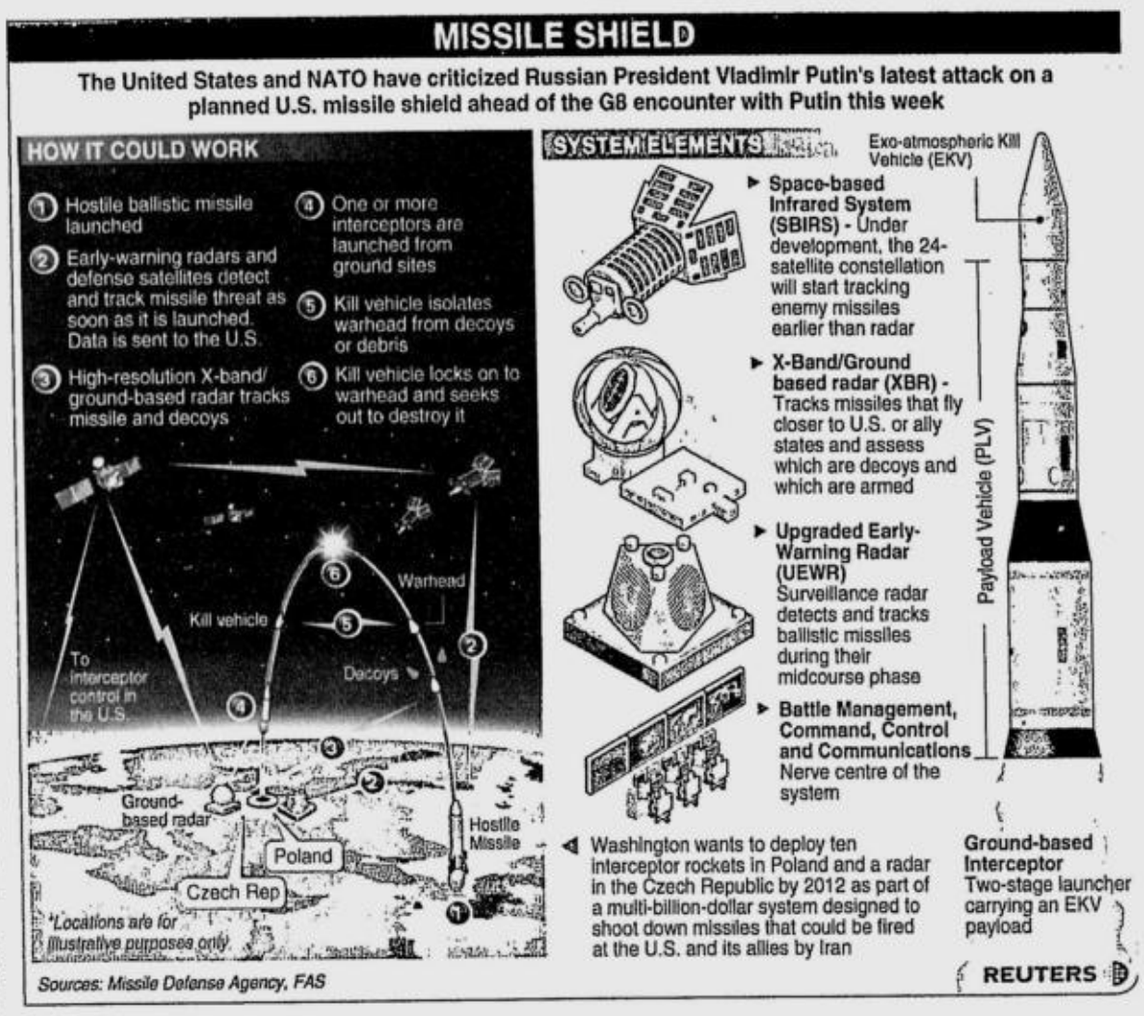
The two powers are also at odds on the fate of breakaway Serbian province Kosovo, with Washington backing independence and Moscow supporting Belgrade's efforts to prevent autonomy at all costs. Bush met in Prague with a senior ethnic Albanian leader from Kosovo.

On global warming, another contentious issue where the Europeans have clashed frequently with Washington, it appeared leaders would make progress on goals to negotiate a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol which Washington shunned in 2001.

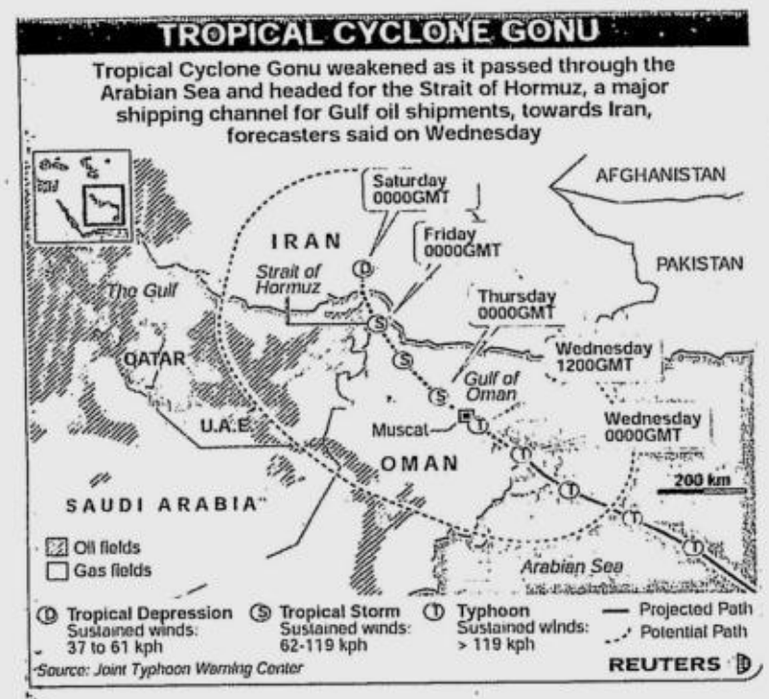
In an interview with Britain's Guardian newspaper on the eve of the summit, Blair said he was convinced that he could persuade Bush to sign up to a "substantial cut" in greenhouse gas emissions, in line with UN-backed targets.

"I think the announcement by President Bush last week was significant and important, and it is absurd to say otherwise, since it moved things on," said Blair, who stands down as prime minister in three weeks' time.

"... at the heart of (a deal) there has to be a global target for a substantial cut in emissions. I believe it is possible to get all that way." Climate change proposals from Bush last week had sowed fears in Europe that Washington would go outside the well-established United Nations process to curb greenhouse gas emissions. *Reuters*



Storm hits Oman, threatens oil-rich region



MUSCAT, OMAN—OMAN EVACuated tens of thousands on Wednesday and closed the major port of Sohar northwest of the capital Muscat, as a weakening Cyclone Gonu roared toward the Strait of Hormuz—the world's major transport artery for Persian Gulf oil.

As heavy rains lashed coastal areas, authorities closed all operations at the port of Sohar and evacuated the 11,000 workers, port spokesperson Dirk Jan De Vink said.

Sohar's oil refinery and petrochemical plant remained running at very low levels, with authorities considering a total shutdown, De Vink said.

De Vink said he and the other beach front residents of the city of 60,000 were leaving their homes, all threatened by rising tides and large waves pushed by the approaching storm.

"These people know the force of the sea and they're doing the right thing," he said. "Most of them are leaving or have already left."

Electricity went out in Muscat by noon Wednesday, as winds of 100 kilometers per hour hit the capital. Oman television broadcast footage of streets and buildings flooded with water. Health ministry official Ali bin Gaafar bin Mohammed said rescue workers had difficulties reaching affected areas.

"Even helicopters cannot fly, so it is very difficult," he said. In the nearby Al-Amriyat town, a flood-related mudslide closed a main road.

Flights in and out of Oman's Seeb International Airport were canceled on Wednesday, according to an official Hamad bin Ali al Abri. Flights that were en route to Muscat were diverted to other airports in the region, he said.

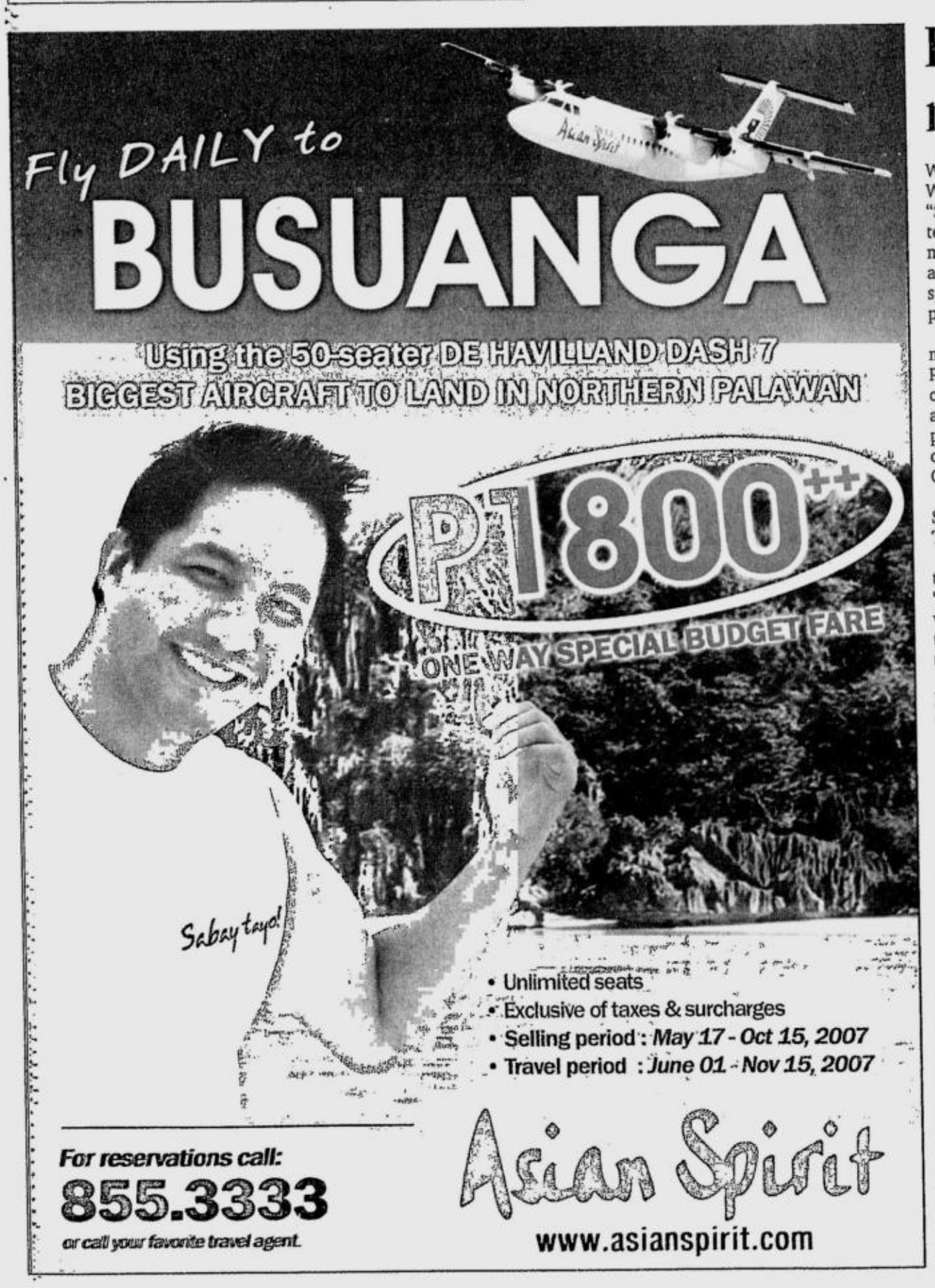
Further northeast, in the UAE port of Fujairah, the world's third-largest shipping fuel center, all refueling and ship-to-ship supply operations had been halted. Ships were being allowed to berth but other marine activities were suspended, officials said.

A few ships were still sailing through the nearby Strait of Hormuz despite 4-6-foot swells and strong winds, according to Suresh Nair of the Gulf Agency Co. shipping firm.

"The entire area is unsafe. Vessels that were bound to call here say they are diverting because of the storm," Nair said. "Some are still going through the strait."

Oil prices rose on Wednesday amid fears of the storm's impact on the oil-rich region.

"The latest on the storm indicates it will hit land in southeastern Iran—which could possibly disrupt shipping through the Arabian Gulf, and that's caused some concern in the trading community," said Victor Shum, an energy analyst with Purvin & Gertz in Singapore. *AP*



Ex-White House aide gets 30 months in prison for perjury

WASHINGTON—FORMER White House aide Lewis "Scooter" Libby was sentenced on Tuesday to 30 months in prison for lying to an FBI inquiry in a case which spotlighted flaws in the US push to wage war on Iraq.

Libby, 56, once one of the most trusted aides to US Vice President Dick Cheney, was convicted in March for perjury and obstruction in a case probing whether White House officials leaked the name of CIA officer Valerie Plame.

Libby was also fined $250,000 by the court on Tuesday.

He told Judge Reggie Walton he hoped the court would "consider, along with the jury verdict, my whole life" in determining an appropriate sentence.

But the tough sanction handed down was in line with the 30-to-37 month term sought by special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, and with federal guidelines.

LIBBY AP

"It needs to make a clear statement that truth matters and one's status in life does not," Fitzgerald told the judge ahead of the verdict.

Walton acknowledged Libby's contribution to national security following the terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. But he added: "we expect and demand a lot from people ... who have the welfare and security of the nation in their hands."

Cheney branded the jailing of his trusted former aide a "tragedy," and voiced hope the sentence would be revised.

"Lynne and I remain deeply saddened by this tragedy," Cheney said in statement, naming his wife.

"The defense has indicated it plans to appeal the conviction in the case. Speaking as friends, we hope that our system will return a final result consistent with what we know of this fine man." He added: "Scooter has dedicated much of his life to public service at the State Department, the Department of Defense and the White House ... he has served the nation tirelessly and with great distinction." *AFP*

Bin Laden alive, says Taliban

DUBAI—A BROTHER OF A slain Taliban leader said al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden was alive and well and that he had received a letter of condolence from him after his brother was killed in May.

"He is alive, active and well," Haji Mansour Dadullah, a Taliban militant leader, said of Bin Laden.

"He sent me a letter of condolence after the martyrdom of my brother Mullah Dadullah," he told Al Jazeera television. It was not clear when the interview was taken.

Mullah Dadullah was killed by US-led forces. His death was seen as the most serious blow to the Taliban insurgency since the militants' removal from power in 2001 by a US-led coalition for harboring Bin Laden and Qaida militants.

Bin Laden "told me to follow in the steps of my brother and urged Muslims to follow the steps of Mullah Dadullah because he was a mujahid," said Dadullah, who was described by Jazeera as a Taliban military leader.

Mullah Dadullah was the main architect behind rising attacks, including suicide raids, against Afghan and Western troops in southern Afghanistan, as well as kidnappings of foreigners and locals and a series of beheadings.

Mullah Dadullah has been replaced by his relatively unknown brother, Mullah Bakht Mohammad.

Dadullah told Jazeera that Saudi-born Bin Laden was avoiding media exposure for safety.

"These are just military tactics. He prefers not to appear because if he appeared in the media or met people he might face danger," he said. "I urged him not to meet anyone and to stay in hiding and continue to give directives ... so that al-Qaida stays active in Afghanistan and the world," he said in an interview conducted in an open field in Afghanistan. *Reuters*

SPORTS

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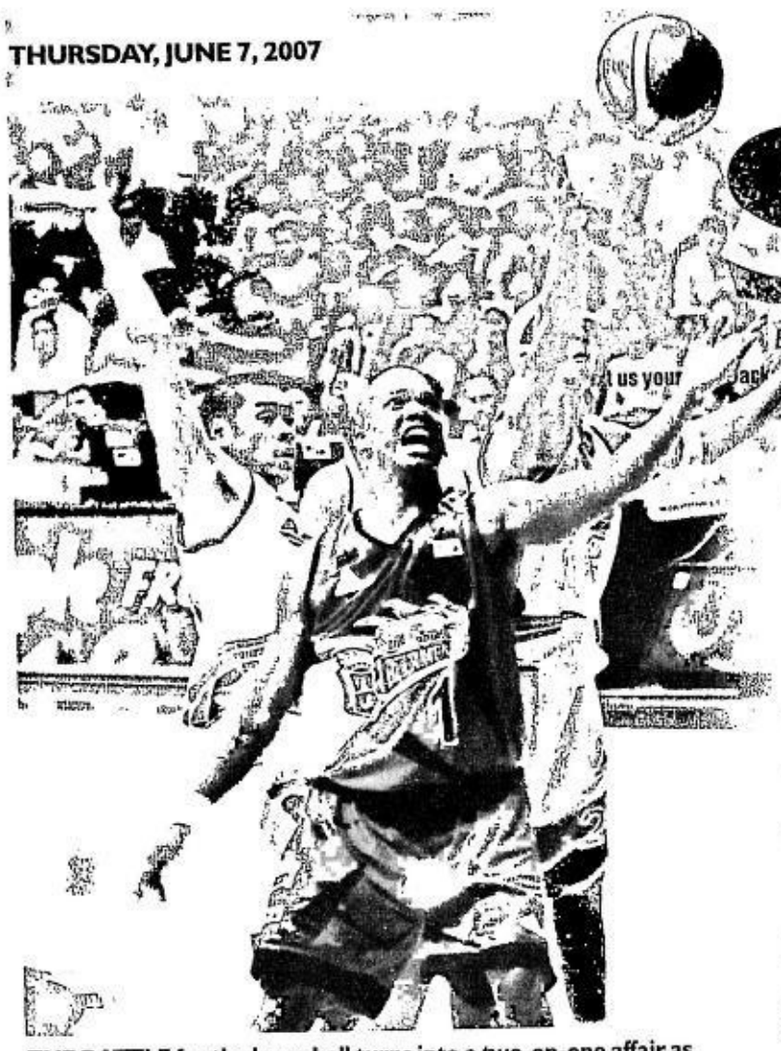
WHAT'S INSIDE

Maria gets sharp on clay /A24



THE BATTLE for the loose ball turns into a two-on-one affair as hardworking San Miguel import Galen Young (center) tries to regain possession of the leather against the Air21 frontline duo of Homer Se (left) and Arwind Santos. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

'Group of death'

Fiba Asia draw puts Nationals together with heavyweights China, Jordan, Iran

By Musong R. Castillo

MORBID THOUGH IT MAY SOUND, BUT CHOT Reyes picked the perfect words to describe the latest turn of events in Philippine basketball.

"We're in the group of death," Reyes told the INQUIRER over the phone, a few minutes after learning where Team Philippines landed after the Fiba Asia championship draw yesterday in Japan.

"We're in the worst position we could be in," continued Reyes. "We drew the biggest and best teams in the (Asian) region."

There was no luck in the draw for the Filipinos after they found themselves in the bracket of no less than mighty China and rock-solid Jordan and Iran in Group A, making survival of the eliminations a tough feat in itself.

"The good thing about it is that if we survive the eliminations, the quarterfinals will be relatively easy," Reyes said.

"You work so hard only to leave your fate to the luck of the draw," he continued. "This (RP) team and this country have come too far to be denied. We will go to Beijing or we will die trying."

Tournament format will call for the top two finishers in each of the four groups to march on to the quarterfinals, where another set of knockout matches will be held to determine the Final Four.

Technically, the tournament will only stake one slot to the Beijing Games, the hosts Chinese already seeded. That means that if China wins the Tokushima joust, only the second placer will go to Beijing.

Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Japan are in Group B, Qatar, India, Kazakhstan and Indonesia are in Group C and Korea, Hong Kong, Syria and Chinese-Taipei making up the final bracket.

Jordan was a solid force in the last Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, while Iran manhandled the Philippines three times in the Fiba Asia Champions Cup recently in Tehran, Iran.

One of those games against Iran was an exhibition during a break in the Champions Cup against the real Iranian national side that played without its Champions Cup imports.

Jordan, on the other hand, reached the final four of the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Reyes said that it his not his style to dwell on the negatives. He emphasized that at this point, he will focus his sights on beating Jordan and the Iranians and let China "take care of itself."

Team Philippines, which was assembled last March after a two-year suspension by the international basktball federation (Fiba) was lifted, finished fourth in the Champions Cup but went undefeated in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association tournament in Thailand a couple of weeks back.

Reyes still has two international tournaments to play in before flying to Japan for the Fiba Asia next month.

REYES: We'll die trying. PDI PHOTO

Express roar past Beermen, gain quarters

By Musong R. Castillo

GAMES TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Coca-Cola
7:20 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. San Miguel Beer

ARWIND SANTOS SCORED 10 OF his 23 points in the fourth quarter last night and led Air21 to a 103-99 victory over San Miguel Beer that shoved the Express into the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup quarterfinals at the Araneta Coliseum.

Santos added a free throw in the Express' last four points inside the final 16.7 seconds as Air21 pushed the Beermen into a knockout game with Sta. Lucia in the wild card starting tomorrow.

Shawn Daniels also had a split in that closing spurt to wind up with 22, and Mark Clemence Telan finished off San Miguel with two more charities with five-tenths of a second remaining.

"Even when we were losing a few games (near the end of the eliminations), I told the players that this was already an improvement," said coach Bo Perasol, who made it past the wild card for the first time in five tries.

Air21 finished its elimination round stint with a 10-8 card on Sunday and was dragged into this playoff.

Not many pundits gave the Express a great chance at pulling off the win, especially since they were coming off a five-game losing streak and were playing without top local scorer Gary David.

David went under the knife last week to repair an ACL tear, but the Express hardly showed signs of missing him with five Express hitting 14 points or more.

Galen Young led the Beermen for the second straight game with 31 points last night. But his efforts weren't enough to prop San Miguel up as it fell into a miss-you-die situation with the Realtors.

The other wild card pairing pits Purefoods against Coca-Cola with the winners advancing opposite each other for the only quarterfinal berth staked in this round.

As things stand, Air21 bagged the No. 5 seed, with Talk 'N Text snagging No. 4 and the loser of the Alaska vs Barangay Ginebra playoff at presstime taking No. 3.

Niño Canaleta, the three-time Slam Dunk champion, scored 17 of his 19 points in the final two periods while Aris Dimaunahan sparkled in David's absence by hitting 18.

Danny Ildefonso was good for 19 points for the Beermen, with the two-time winner of the MVP trophy tossing in eight in the fourth period in vain.

The scores:

First Game

AIR21 103—Santos 23, Daniels 22, Canaleta 19, Dimaunahan 18, Telan 14, Se 4, Andaya 3, Marquez 0, Torion 0, Arboleda 0.

SAN MIGUEL BEER 99—Young 31, Ildefonso 19, Gonzales 10, Cablay 9, Villanueva 7, Tenorio 6, Pena 6, Racela 4, Espinas 3, Wilson 2, Calaguio 2.

Quarters: 23-21; 53-50; 70-75; 103-99

Rico-Romel trade up in board meeting

A CRUCIAL PBA BOARD MEETING WILL BE held today mainly to discuss the controversial Restricted Trading List, which at least two prominent members said is hurting the league.

The meeting is set at lunchtime at the league's office in Libis, and most, if not all, are expected to be there.

Chair Ricky Vargas of Talk 'N Text expressed confidence that "the gentlemen of the board" will be able to discuss things and settle the issue at the soonest possible time.

Former chair Buddy Encarnado of Sta. Lucia and Alaska's Joaqui Trillo were both very open in discussing the loopholes in the RTL with mediamen last week.

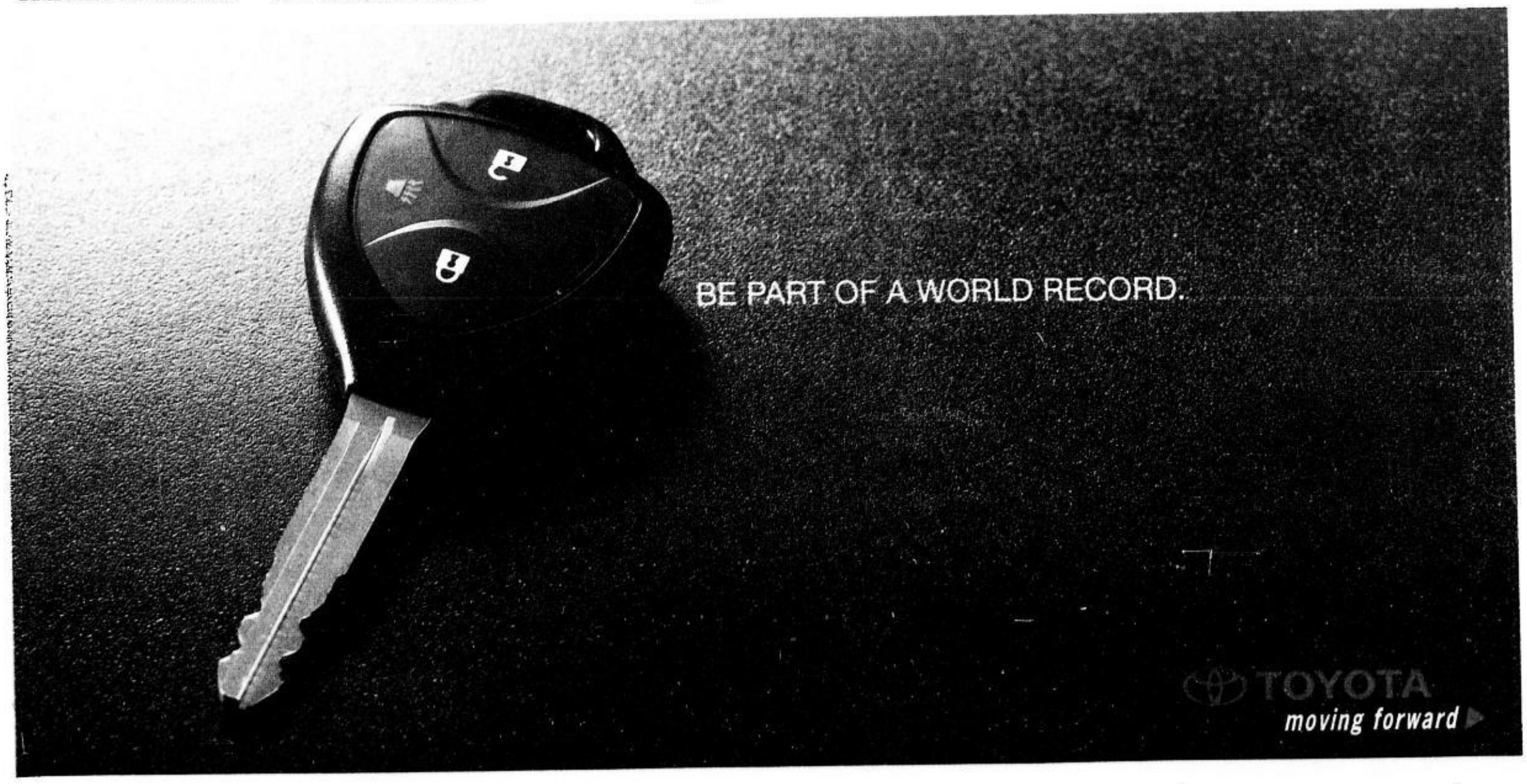
They said that they are not the only teams seeking clarification on how the three-team, three-player trade involving Romel Adducul and Enrico Villanueva and sister teams Purefoods and San Miguel was approved.

Though Vargas said that the letter of request that he got specifically questioned only the RTL, Trillo, in particular, said that he would bat for the revocation of commissioner Noli Eala's approval of the trade.

"We want to know what's really going on," Trillo had said.

The protesting members claim that the RTL was not implemented in its first true test, when Red Bull's Villanueva was dealt to San Miguel for Adducul after being stricken off Red Bull's RTL.

Musong R. Castillo



Lyceum tries to keep slate spotless

GAMES TODAY (*The Arena*)
1 p.m. Lyceum vs UST
3 p.m. San Sebastian vs Adamson
5 p.m. Ateneo vs FEU

LYCEUM WILL TRY TO KEEP ITS RECORD unblemished while San Sebastian seeks the second semifinal berth today in the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

Sporting a 5-0 slate, the Lady Pirates tangle at 1 p.m. with the University of Santo Tomas Tigresses, the UAAP defending champions who are on a two-game slide.

Starring guest players Josielyn Degorostiza and Cristina Salak, Sherrilyn Carillo, Beverly Boto, Dahlia Cruz and Jane Kathleen Jarin, Lyceum has taken the entire league by storm, downing Ateneo, Letran, San Sebastian, Far Eastern University and Adamson to take the solo lead in the eight-team tournament.

Carlillo ranks sixth in scoring, producing 81 points so far, while Degorostiza is 10th with 72.

UST, after suffering successive losses to Adamson and San Sebastian for a 2-3 card, is in danger of missing the semifinals of this event which it topped in its inaugural staging in 2004.

The SSC Lady Stags take on the Adamson Lady Falcons at 3 p.m., eyeing their fifth win in six games and the second semis seat behind Lyceum.

Thai guest player Jaroensri Bualee will again spearhead San Sebastian with her attacking skills that have ranked her first in that department with a 38.74 success average.

Ateneo stands to gain at least a tie for a semis berth with a win over FEU in the 5 p.m. match.

Assistant playing coach and guest player Kanchana Jindarat, also from Thailand, is a doubtful starter for the Lady Eagles after suffering from back spasms during the fifth set of their 25-16, 25-20, 22-25, 20-25, 13-15 defeat to Adamson last Tuesday.

Jindarat is herself a replacement for injured compatriot and fellow guest player Intuan Namphon.

Jindarat is good for at least 13 points per game and has a 34.97 successful attack average, third overall in the league. *Romina S. Austria*

Two do-or-die PBL duels today

JC INTAL will play a crucial role anew for Harbour Centre. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GAMES TODAY (*Olivarez Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Toyota Balintawak vs Cebuana Lhuillier
4 p.m.—Henkel-Sista vs Harbour Centre

TWO SUDDEN DEATH MATCHES in the semifinals.

In a thrilling twist, the two finalists of the PBL Unity Cup will be decided today after a couple of do-or-die matches at the Olivarez Sports Center.

It will be the Cebuana Lhuillier Moneymen against the Toyota Balintawak Road Kings at 2 p.m., while the defending champion Harbour Centre Batang Pier tangle at 4 p.m. with the Henkel Sista Super Sealers.

The survivors will forge a best-of-five title series beginning this Saturday.

"I have great faith in my players, so with the momentum swinging to our side, we hope to make it to the championship round," said coach Luigi Trillo of top seed Cebuana, which managed to tie the best-of-three series with Toyota Balintawak after a 71-62 win Tuesday.

"This is our first season in the league so we'll do everything to make our first year memorable," added Trillo, who lost Game 1, 68-65, last week.

Despite dropping an 81-78 decision that kept Henkel Sista alive also Tuesday, Harbour Centre remains favored in its quest for a third straight championship appearance in the face of reports that Fil-Am Ryan Reyes may not suit for the Super Sealers after aggravating a groin injury.

The Batang Pier won the semifinal opener, 87-62, with Reyes sitting it out after getting injured early in the contest.

Harbour coach Jorge Gallent also expects his wards to drop their individualistic plays which he said doomed his team last Tuesday.

"Our individual plays killed us. We didn't kick the ball out," said Gallent of their Game 2 loss where his boys made only 12 assists, which was a low mark for the team this season.

MVP race leader Jason Castro, JC Intal and Jonathan Fernandez are also expected to step up for Harbour, although Henkel Sista is not intimidated a bit going into the crucial match.

"We proved that we can beat a strong team like Harbour," said Henkel's coach Caloy Garcia.

Meanwhile, Toyota Balintawak hopes to come up with the same Game 1 formula that allowed it stop top Moneymen Ken Bono, Erick dela Cuesta and Ariel Capus.

But for the Road Kings to reach the finals for the second time in three conferences, they have to get a super-charged performance from former MVP Fil-Am Joe Devance. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

'Asian basketball still an infant'

SEOUL—FIBA ASIA PRESIDENT Sheikh Saud Bin Ali Al-Thani believes basketball has the potential to become the region's number one sport, but admits it is still in its infancy.

"If we persist in what we are doing with a little more perseverance, the days are not far off when basketball will become the most popular sport in the continent at all levels," he told the website of the sport's governing body.

"My dream is to see an Asian nation become the champion of the world among both men and women. And I'm sure we will work our hardest in turning that dream into a reality."

While Chinese, Filipino, Japanese and Korean fans have embraced the sport, it has been slower to hit home elsewhere.

Asia has also failed to produce stars of its own with China's Yao Ming the exception, acting as the region's face in the NBA.

Last year, the Houston Rockets center pointed out the need for a development system similar to US youth and college basketball or European leagues where Asians can perfect their skills against higher-level talent.

The Qatari Sheikh said a blueprint was being drawn up to take the game to the next level. *AFP*

RP karatekas bag six gold medals in Thailand

TEAM Philippines members show off their medals after the awarding ceremonies.

TEAM PHILIPPINES, REPRESENTed by the Karate Development Arts and Sports (KDA), bagged six gold medals en route to a third-place finish in the recent Thailand Open Karate-do Championships held at the Saphan Hin gym in Phuket.

The 18-member Team KDA-Philippines also took home 5 silver and 11 bronze medals in the event hosted by the Thailand Karatedo Federation.

Vietnam topped the nine-nation meet with 12 gold medals, host Thailand finished second with eight golds while Kazakhstan had five gold medals for fourth spot. All three nations, along with Brunei Darussalam, fielded their Southeast Asian Games teams.

The Filipino gold medal winners were: Kiana Cardeno (2), 9-11 years old girls kata and 10-11 years old girls kumite; Mabel Arevalo (2), 12-14 years old girls kata and 12-13 years old girls kumite; Charles Bonagua, 10-11 years boys kumite; and Miguel Villasis, 9-11 years old boys kata.

Settling for silver medals were Kevin Salas (2), 15-17 years old boys kata and 16-17 years old boys kumite; Carelia de Castro, 16-17 years old girls kata; Jose Rabin Carandang, 6-7 years old boys kumite; and Prince Zipagan, 9-11 years old boys kata.

The team, headed by national team coach David Lay, also produced bronze medalists in Joshua Santos (two medals), Rachel Cuden, Reden Cuden, Aliza Leon, Charles Bonagua, Prince Zipagan, Miguel Villasis, Concepcion, Joy Ruiz, Jonnie Ocular and Reiner de Leon.

Explosive PBA meet on tap

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

TODAY AT HIGH noon, the PBA board meets at its new Libis office to tackle the Enrico Villanueva-Romel Adducul trade which has caused major dissension in the 34-year-old basketball league.

As reported in the papers, four disgruntled ballclubs led by Alaska will appeal for the nullification of the trade in what is expected to be a most explosive meeting.

I don't know if this was also published in the papers, but I heard from one of the teams that a walkout is set to be staged if the trade is not reversed.

Going a step further, there was also a report in one of the broadsheets that a breakaway by the four teams from the league could ensue if the trade is not voided.

Whether any of these drastic steps will be taken is for us to find out after today's meeting where a hundred percent attendance is expected.

* * *

With such a volatile situation, I asked PBA chairman Ricky Vargas, who did not expect to be confronted with such a predicament on the penultimate month of his term, for his prognosis of today's meeting.

Ricky was quick to answer.

"Could be bloody," he said. "This is a chairman's challenge on facilitation and statesmanship. In the end, hopefully, it would be a collegial decision."

After 34 years of the PBA, I told him that it always is, just like a television series that has become so predictable.

But then again, who knows? There just might be a surprising twist, for a change.

* * *

From Japan, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas executive director Patrick Gregorio relayed the results of yesterday's FIBA Asia Men's Championship draw results where the Philippines landed in Group A with China, Jordan and Iran.

Just about everyone, including SBP chairman Ricky Vargas, felt it is going to be one tough uphill battle for the Filipinos.

Pato, on the other hand, while initially unhappy with the bracketing, because we ended up in a tough group, came to realize the brighter side of the picture.

"The good thing about this bracketing is we will not meet China in the next round," said Pato who added that Group C (with Qatar, India, Kazakhstan and Indonesia) was the weakest bracket.

* * *

The recent demise of PBA fan Illuminada Pagala (Aling Luming) has been giving Mrs. Belen Fran the creeps.

Mrs. Fran, mother of Talk 'N Text cager Patrick and the elder Raymond, was awarded a trophy of appreciation by the PBA for being one of the league's most loyal fans.

The other two were Aling Luming and Jolens, whose full name I can't remember at the moment.

Jolens died about two years ago after falling off a motorcycle and hitting her head in the pavement.

Aling Luming, on the other hand, died of a stroke recently.

According to Mrs. Fran, this is not a healthy trend.

To break the spell, she plans to return the memento awarded to her by the PBA.

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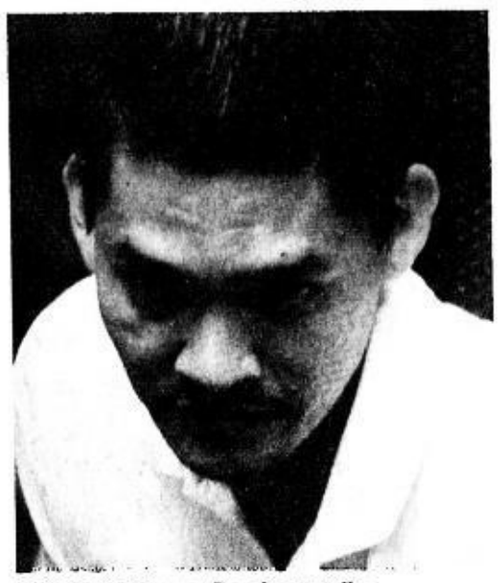
Alcano shoots for World Masters title


RONATO Alcano: Ready to strike

FILIPINO DOUBLE WORLD CHAMPION (WPA 9-ball and WPA 8-ball) Ronato Alcano opens his bid in the 2007 PartyPoker.net World Pool Masters against former world trick shot ruler Fabio Petroni of Italy starting tomorrow at the Hotel Zuiderduin, Egmond aan Zee, in Holland.

Alcano reached the semifinal round in the second leg of the 2007 Guinness 9-ball tour last month in Kaohsiung, Taiwan . He made it to the quarterfinal round in the inaugural leg of the Guinness 9-ball tour in April in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"I'm in deep training these days, including playing in money games," Alcano said in Filipino before leaving the country last Tuesday. "There are many foreign tournaments slated this year."

After two legs of the Guinness tour, Alcano has a total of 70 ranking points, good for fourth spot in the order of merit being lorded by Taiwanese Chang Jung-lin (90 points), Yang Ching-shun (90 points) and Chao Fong-pang (80 points).

The Masters offers a total prize of $62,000 (about P2.9 million) with the winner getting $20,000. First round losers will collect $1,500.

Matches will adopt the race-to-eight, alternate break format with a 45-second shot-clock. The loser of every tie gets eliminated.

The 34-year-old Alcano, mainstay of Bugsy promotion, said he's been practicing against Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes of Puyat Sports and reigning National Open champ Lee Vann Corteza of Negros Billiard Stable at the Bugsy Lair's pool house in Quezon City.

Alcano and Corteza are invited to play in the third leg of Guinness 9-ball tour on June 15-17 at the Gentings Highland Resort in Malaysia alongside Bugsy stablemates Jeffrey de Luna and Roberto Gomez.

They will also join the $50,000 winner-take all International Challenge of Champions in August at the Mohegan Suns Casino in Unscasville, Connecticut.

Last year's edition of the Masters saw Ralf Souquet of Germany beat Filipino-Canadian Alex Pagulayan, 8-4, in the finals. Souquet, eyeing his sixth Masters title, takes on David Alcaide of Spain in the first round.

Other first round matches pit Japanese Naoyuki Oi vs German Oliver Ortmann; Chinese Li He-wen vs Scot Pat Holtz; England's Imran Majid vs The Netherlands' Niels Feijen; Taiwanese Wu Chia-ching vs Canadian Tyler Edey and Malta's Tony Drago vs Germany's Thomas Engert.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

PBC OPEN

Liza leads; Coo moves up to 2nd

NATIONAL TEAM MAINSTAY LIZA DEL Rosario and surprising Jeff Chan emerged as new leaders Tuesday in the Open singles of the 36th PBC-Boysen International Open Tenpin Bowling championships at the SM Mall of Asia Bowling Center.

Bowling Hall of Famer Bong Coo likewise made her move in Class A, moving just nine pins behind pacesetter Anne Marie Kiac.

Del Rosario grabbed the ladies' Open singles lead with a four-game series of 853 to relegate Lara and Apple Posadas to second and third places with outputs of 814 and 803, respectively.

Chan, one of the top bets of the Tenpin Bowling Association of Makati, averaged 246.5 (218, 255, 247 and 266) to overtake Southeast Asian Games gold medal winner Markwin Tee for the lead with a 966 total as against Tee's 970.

Another national pool member, Nicodemus Valderrama, lost his grip on the lead and dropped to third place with a 966.

Timberpro's Coo made 747 to trail Kiac's 756 while Liza Vicente occupies third at 720.

RP junior bowler Jose Collins paces the men's Class A singles with a 993, Jehrt Santos follows with an 894 and Steve Robles is in third with an 891.

Collins then joined Edrick Florencio in topping the men's Class O doubles event with an 866 total, 14 pins ahead of RP team's Chester King and Miguel Crisol, who combined for 852.

Jojo Canare and Coo retained the ladies' Class A doubles lead for the second straight day with their 785.

Inquirer Sports Staff

FAMILY AFFAIR: The Dy Buncio family ruled the recent 42nd Summer Youth Program at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Nicholas James or 'Nicky', 11 years old, (above) emerged overall champion in the Advanced Division using Proline Impact, according to officer-in-charge Edcel Regalado. His sister Andrea Rose, 10, (top right) and brother Matthew, 6, finished 1-2 in the Beginners' Division using Proline Junior Star.

Espinola squash No. 1

RICKY ESPINOLA KEPT HIS dominance in the local squash world by beating Robert Garcia in the finals of the recent SRAP National Circuit at the Makati Sports Club. Espinola won, 10-8, 4-9, 9-7, 9-4, to bag the Division 1 crown in the second leg of the tourney organized by the Squash Rackets Association of the Philippines.

Former titlist Arnel Begornia finished third at the expense of Richard Espinola, 9-6, 9-4, 9-7.

P.J. Austria emerged Division 2 champion. He subdued Nelson Flores, 9-7, 10-9, 9-2, in the finals.

Myca Arebado took third place by subduing Ayssa Dalida, 9-6, 9-10, 9-6, 9-0.

SRAP is headed by former Philippine Olympic Committee secretary general Romeo Ribano.

SPORTSWATCH

Diplomats to play in Romulo Invitational

AMBASSADORS PETER BECKINGHAM OF ENGLAND AND RYUICHIRO YAMAzaki of Japan and other heads of foreign missions in the Philippines are taking part in the Secretary Alberto G. Romulo Invitational Golf Cup 2007 on Sunday at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Former President Fidel V. Ramos, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Mandaluyong Congressman-elect Neptali M. Gonzales II and Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro R. Mendoza have been invited to hit the ceremonial balls at 7 a.m. Others who have confirmed their attendance are Ambassadors Riita Resch of Finland, Robert Vornis of the Netherlands, Peter Vermeulen of South Africa, Juan Felipe Pitty of Panama, Ramon Rechibei of Palau, Hong Jong-ki of South Korea, In May of Cambodia, Leuane Sombounkhan of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Damien Gamiandu of Papua New Guinea and Wm M. Senevirathna of Sri Lanka. Other diplomats are Martin Brisbois, Jack Lazarus and Bill Marshall of Canada, Mahmudin of Indonesia, Ndubuisi V. Amaku and Charles O. Akintunde of Nigeria; Tay Kim Chiew and Raymond Chow of Singapore. The event is intended to raise funds for the scholarship program and other projects of the DFA Ladies Foundation.

Sports Tourism Forum at Subic Bay's Legenda

TO ENCOURAGE AND STIMULATE SPORTS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE country, Selrahco Management Services, in cooperation with the Department of Tourism, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and Greater Subic Bay Tourism Bureau will hold a Sports Tourism Forum on June 26 at Legenda Hotel, Subic Bay Free Port Zone. Cynthia Carrion, undersecretary of Sports and Wellness, Department of Tourism, William 'Butch' Ramirez, chair of the Philippine Sports Commission, Joey Singian, managing director, Adidas Philippines; Jose Capistrano, deputy chair-PHILSOC, 2005 Southeast Asian Games and Princess Galura of IMG Philippines will speak on topics relevant to sports tourism and sports marketing. The forum is a must for event organizers, hotels, resorts, tourism councils, sports commissions, schools, sports facilities, event sponsors, sports clubs, malls, sports associations, media organizations and tour operators to attend. Registration fee is P700, inclusive of meals and a certificate. Contact Ms Portia Zabala or Ariel Galliguez at (047) 252 4199 and (047) 252 4123, or email at starhtel@mozcom.com.

GNC Live Well backs national cagers

THE NATIONAL MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM HAS A NEW PARTNER IN ITS QUEST of a slot in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. GNC Live Well, the leader of high-performance vitamin and food supplements, recently signed an agreement with the Philippine Basketball Association as the official supplement of the all-PBA RP squad. JV Borromeo, Chief Operating Officer of GNC, said he was thrilled at being able to play an important part in the physical condition of the national cagers. RP team members who are already GNC users are Ginebra's Jayjay Helterbrand and Purefoods' Kerby Raymundo. The Nationals will be supplied with GNC Whey Protein, Creatine, Mega Men Multivitamins, Glucosamine with Chondroitin and Vitamin C. The SMC RP Team is scheduled for tune-up tournaments in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Korea, Taipei and Manila before competing in the FIBA Asia Championship set to start July 28 in Tokushima, Japan.

Puno, Uy lead NCA World Championship Derby

INTERIOR SEC. RONNIE PUNO AND BEBOT UY ARE AMONG THE CO-LEADERS after the first day of the National Cockers' Association (NCA) World Championship Derby at the Pasay City Cockpit on Tuesday. Puno's entry, Wildwings Sundance 1, and Uy's entry, Blue Quartz, garnered two points each. Also with two points each are RT 114, www.swing.com, LCC, PATL Winning Line, WTJ Makati Collseum II, RLB Fatman, SAF Fiscalizer and Red Creek 2. The entry Riverside follows with 1.5 points. The second day of the event will be held tonight. The overall champion of the derby will also be crowned NCA Cocker of the Year.

Jaca staking WBO crown in Moscow

By Salven L. Lagumbay

JIMREX JACA

WORLD BOXING ORganization (WBO) Asia Pacific super featherweight champion Jimrex Jaca will defend his title against undefeated Alisher Rahimov on June 30 at the Olympisky Sport Hall in Moscow, Russia.

The bout will be Jaca's first since winning the title on a seventh-round knockout over Indonesia's Simson Butar-Butar last Feb. 24 in Cebu.

Also at stake will be the IBF Inter-continental super featherweight crown.

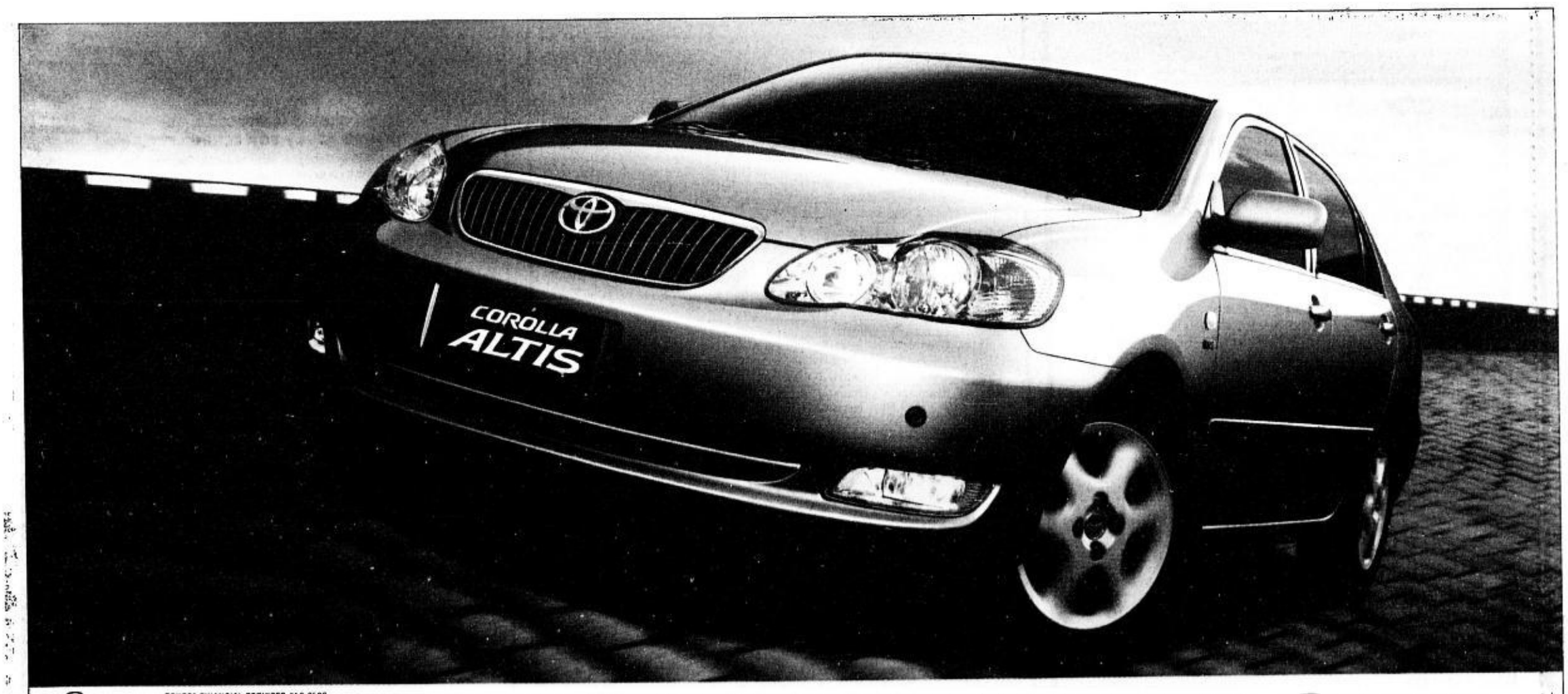
The 29-year-old Rahimov, nicknamed "Ali," holds a perfect record of 14 wins with 7 KOs. He is the interim Russian super featherweight crown.

He will be facing his first foreign opponent in Jaca, who once challenged now reigning WBC super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico.

Among Rahimov's victims was former Manny Pacquiao opponent Serikzhan Yeshmagambetov, whom he stopped in the fourth round last year.

Yeshmagambetov created a name for himself in the country when he knocked down Pacquiao in their 2003 fight at the Luneta, only to be stopped in the fifth round.

The 23-year-old southpaw Jaca, nicknamed "The Executioner," boasts of a 28-3-1, 13 KO record, and will be seeing action in his seventh overseas assignment.



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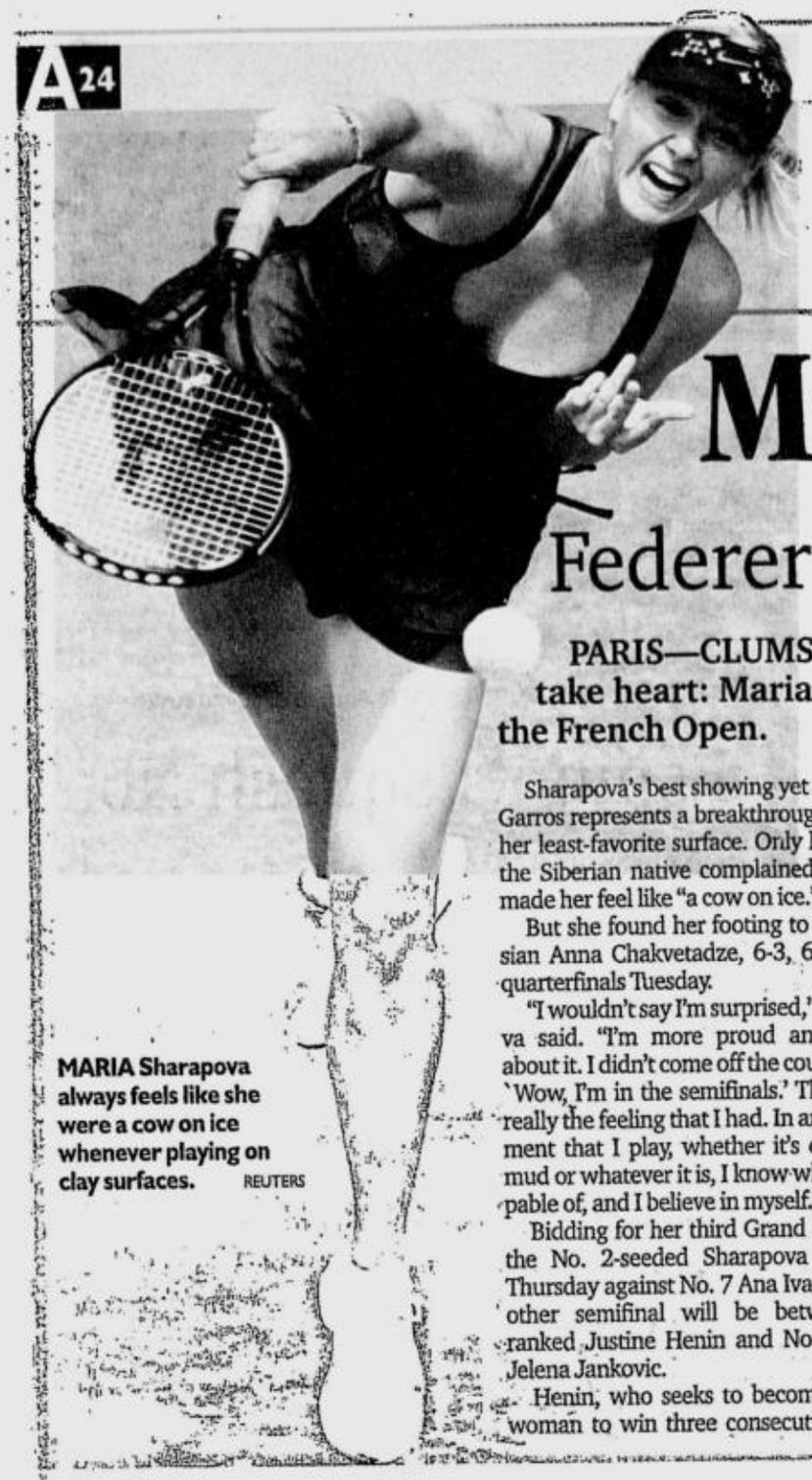


MARIA Sharapova always feels like she were a cow on ice whenever playing on clay surfaces. REUTERS

Maria gets sharp on clay

Federerer finally drops a set–but advances anyway

PARIS—CLUMSY COWS IN COLD CLIMATES CAN take heart: Maria Sharapova is in the semifinals of the French Open.

Sharapova's best showing yet at Roland Garros represents a breakthrough on clay, her least-favorite surface. Only last week, the Siberian native complained the stuff made her feel like "a cow on ice."

But she found her footing to beat Russian Anna Chakvetadze, 6-3, 6-4, in the quarterfinals Tuesday.

"I wouldn't say I'm surprised," Sharapova said. "I'm more proud and excited about it. I didn't come off the court and go, 'Wow, I'm in the semifinals.' That wasn't really the feeling that I had. In any tournament that I play, whether it's on clay or mud or whatever it is, I know what I'm capable of, and I believe in myself."

Bidding for her third Grand Slam title, the No. 2-seeded Sharapova will play Thursday against No. 7 Ana Ivanovic. The other semifinal will be between top-ranked Justine Henin and No. 4-seeded Jelena Jankovic.

Henin, who seeks to become the first woman to win three consecutive French Open titles since Monica Seles in 1990-92, advanced by beating Serena Williams, 6-4, 6-3.

Henin dominated with a vast array of shots, while Williams blamed herself for a sloppy, passive performance.

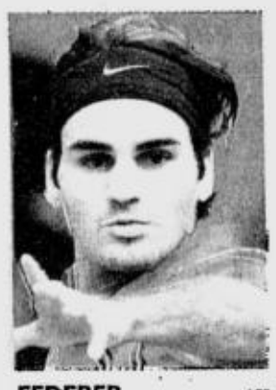
"I never play like that," Williams said. "Sometimes you've got to just step back and say, 'OK, try this, try that, or try Plan B.' But I think my Plan B was to make errors."

Ivanovic defeated 2006 runner-up Svetlana Kuznetsova, 6-0, 3-6, 6-1, and Jankovic beat No. 6 Nicole Vaidisova, 6-3, 7-5.

In the men's semifinals Friday, top-ranked Roger Federer will try to improve to 9-0 against No. 4-seeded Nikolay Davydenko.

Federer lost a set for the first time in 12 Grand Slam matches, but regrouped to beat No. 9-seeded Tommy Robredo, 7-5, 1-6, 6-1, 6-2. Davydenko eliminated No. 19 Guillermo Canas, 7-5, 6-4, 6-4.

The last quarterfinals were scheduled for Wednesday: two-time defending champion Rafael Nadal against No. 23 Carlos Moya in an all-Spaniard matchup, and No. 6 Novak Djokovic against unseeded Igor Andreev.



FEDERER AFP

Sharapova said she wouldn't be surprised if she wins the tournament, but she understood why her success this year at Roland Garros might be considered unexpected.

"I haven't really played that much on clay," she said.

She grew up on hard courts and took quickly to grass, winning Wimbledon three years ago at age 17. But the lanky Sharapova has struggled with her movement on clay, although her French Open record was a respectable 11-3 in 2004-06, with two trips to the quarterfinals.

The Russian has now surpassed those showings, even while nursing a sore right shoulder. She missed nearly two months with the injury before returning in May for a French Open tuneup.

"After being so up and down for such a long period of time, you're just grateful for every single moment you can be out on the court and feeling like you have a chance to be healthy, and you're out there enjoying yourself," Sharapova said. "That's really what I'm doing."

She'll have a big edge in experience against the 19-year-old Ivanovic, a first-time Grand Slam semifinalist.

"I'm really excited to get so far," Ivanovic said, "and the tournament is still not over."

Henin faces a potentially tough challenge from Jankovic, who is 44-10 this year and 23-3 on clay. But two of those clay-court losses came against Henin, who is 5-0 against Jankovic.

"I will try to find a way somehow to win," Jankovic said. "I think I can do it because I feel that I'm really physically very fit, and I feel like I move so well on the clay." *AP*

Teenager takes two tennis titles

TEENAGER MARTINA GUBA CAPPED a memorable summer campaign by claiming two crowns in the Head Penn Masters Tournament at the Olivares Sports Center in Parañaque recently.

The 14-year-old netter from La Carlota City, Negros Occidental downed Regina Santiago, 6-3, 6-3, for the 16-under crown, before punctuating her dominance with a 6-1, 6-0 conquest of Jasmine Tan Ho in the 18-under finals.

Guba also outplayed the Olongapo-based Santiago, a silver medalist in the Palarong Pambansa, in the 18-under semis.

It was Guba's sixth crown since her return from stints in the World Junior Tennis Championships in India in April and the Junior Federation Cup in Malaysia in early May.

She also topped the 16-under and 18-under divisions of the Daza Cup and followed it up with a double crown in the Manila Polo Club tournament. *Cedelf P. Tupas*

GUBA

'Chance for other RP sports to shine'

By June Navarro

INSTEAD OF PUTTING TOO MUCH focus on defending the Southeast Asian Games overall title, officials should look at the coming sports gathering in Thailand as an opportunity for other non-performing disciplines to shine.

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez offered this piece of advice following chief of mission Monico Puentevella's forecast that Team Philippines would land a decent second in the 24th edition of the meet this year.

"We've been part of the SEA Games for a long time and based on experience, every host country has privileges that give them a strong chance of winning the overall crown," said Ramirez.

"So in our case, we should see it as an opportunity for the other NSAs (national sports associations) to perform well this time," he added.

Ramirez was referring to badminton, squash, football and weightlifting among other disciplines which failed to make their mark during the previous stagings of the 11-nation sports conclave.

"We should make the most out of it (the SEAG exposure) and focus on the performances of the NSAs which failed to deliver in the past," said Ramirez.

After arriving Tuesday night from a three-day SEAG Federation Council meeting in Nakhon Rachasima, Puentevella said the odds of capturing the overall plum are stacked heavily in Thailand's favor.

The Bacolod congressman said that aside from the host country winning the crown since 2001, the Thais have consistently dominated the Games they've hosted.

Thailand hosted and won what was then known as the Peninsular Games in 1959 followed by another overall win in 1975. It captured its first SEAG title in 1985 in Bangkok before lording it over again in the 1995 Chiang Mai games.

Meanwhile, the PSC has consoled with the family of national volleyball player Ronie Borlagdatan, who was slain the other day during a robbery in Cavite, even as it doled out P20,000 for his family.

Ramirez said the donation will help augment the burial expenses of the 22-year-old spiker. The Philippine Olympic Committee is also set to help the family of Borlagdatan, a 6-foot-2 standout of La Salle-Dasma indoor and beach volley teams.

"There are no guidelines as to the amount we have to shell out to national players who died outside the line of duty, but we do this for humanitarian reason," said Ramirez. *With a report from Marc Anthony Reyes*

Bright prospect for traditional boat rowers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WITH THE ADDITION OF TWO events, the country now has an even stronger chance of retaining the overall championship of the traditional boat race in the Thailand Southeast Asian Games this December.

"As long as we all get to use standard equipment, I think we can easily win all four events," National head coach and Philippine Dragonboat Federation technical director Nestor Ilagan told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The country swept all six traditional boat race events two years ago when it hosted the Games.

The Thai organizers had wanted to hold only two of the six events—the men's and women's 500-meter 10-a-side this time. But the country lobbied along with some member nations and Thailand relented and approved the inclusion of the men's and women's 1,000m 10-a-side.

Left out were the men's 1000-m and 500-m 20-a-side.

Ilagan pointed out, however, that the equipment of all entries should meet the specifications of the Asian Dragonboat Federation and International Dragonboat Federation.

He noted that in 1995 in Chiang Mai, Thai officials provided rival competitors with sub-standard boats and paddles. "I don't want to make any accusations, but that's what happened in Chiang Mai. I hope it won't happen now," he said.

The problem, according to Ilagan, is that the ADBF and IDBF don't have a say in the biennial competitions which are being run by a separate SEA traditional boat race body.

Ilagan said that in the boat race, participants don't bring their own boats and paddles as doing so would cost too much.

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

1. Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is a government agency that takes the whole responsibility for the grant-type foreign aid of the Republic of Korea and invites you to bid for the Design and the Construction work for the construction of the Korea-Philippines Friendship Hospital II, as part of economic cooperation projects with Philippines.
2. Name of Bids: **Design and Construction Work for the Construction of the Korea-Philippines Friendship Hospital II**
3. Scope of Works:

Construction of New buildings

Description of work	Unit	Quantities	Remarks
Outpatient Dept.	Sq.m	900	

4. **Project Budget: 450,000USD**
5. Duration of Construction: **13 months** after the date of the start of construction (including period of making the construction documents)
6. Bid system: Competitive Bidding (Turnkey System)
7. Qualification of the Bidders
   - 7.1 To qualify for award of Contract, bidders shall meet all of the following minimum qualifying criteria. Bidder who does not have qualification can make consortium with the qualified company and in this case, a representative shall submit the consortium agreement.
     - (a) Construction part
       - A company that has a certificate for the construction work by the law of Philippines or Korea.
       - A company that has a total money value of construction work (for buildings) of more than 450,000 USD during the last 3 years.
     - (b) Design part
       - A company that has qualification by the law of Philippines or Korea.
   - 7.2 A company that received the bidding documents and was registered in advance.
8. Evaluation and Award Criteria
   - 8.1 Bid Documents will be evaluated in 4 parts: Performance(20%), Bid Price(20%), Design(50%), fidelity for Bid Documents(10%)
   - 8.2 Bidder who gain the highest points will acquire priority to contract.
   - 8.3 Employer negotiate (acceptance for the things have to be complement) with the Bidder who has priority and will award the Contract to him.
9. Schedule and place for Bids
   - 9.1 Delivery of Bidding Documents: 2007. 06. 18(Mon.), 15:00/ KOICA Philippine office
   - 9.2 Deadline for Registration for Bids: 2007. 06. 25(Mon.), 15:00/KOICA Philippine office
   - 9.3 Deadline for Submission of Bids: 2007. 07.18(Wed.), 15:00 / KOICA Philippine office
   - 9.4 Bid Opening(can be changed): 2007. 07. 20(Fri.), 15:00 / KOICA Philippine office
10. Registration Documents for Bids
    - 10.1 Application for Bids. 1 copy
    - 10.2 Bid Security. 1 copy
    - 10.3 Certificate about the construction work and Joint venture Agreement: 1 copy
11. Bid Security and Forfeiture
    - 11.1 Bidder shall furnish Bid Security in the amount to more than 25,000 USD.
    - 11.2 Bid Security shall be valid for 60 days beyond the bid opening.
    - 11.3 Bid security may be forfeited if a successful Bidder fails to sign the Agreement.
12. Invalidity of Bid
    - 12.1 If the Bidders who register or submit Bids are less than two.
    - 12.2 If there is no Bidder who submit the Cost below the project budget.
13. Others

    A prospective Bidder requiring any clarification of the bidding documents may notify the Employer in writing or facsimile at the Employer's address indicated below. The Employer will respond to any request for clarification received within 5 days since delivery of Bidding document. Any addendum thus issued shall be part of the bidding documents.
14. Reference: KOICA Philippine office
    - 12.1 Address: 18/F Pacific Star Bldg. Makati Avenue, Makati City, Philippines
    - 12.2 E-mail: 1wise@koica.go.kr
    - 12.3 Tel.: 632-811-8268

2007. 06. 07.

President
Korea International Cooperation Agency

(PDI—June 7, 2007)

CDC

Clark Development Corporation
Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Clark Development Corporation, through its Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC), invites consultants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project: FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE PROPOSED CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
Location: Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines
Brief Description: Consultancy Services for the Preparation of a Comprehensive Master Development Plan encompassing physical, socio-economic, marketing, and business plans to ensure maximum economic use of the planning area as the Central Business District for Central and Northern Region.
For the Contract: Php 18,000,000.00 (VAT EXCLUSIVE)
Contract Duration: Ninety-Eight (98) Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should have local and international experience in undertaking a similar completed project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Short-listing of eligible consultants will be done based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant, qualification of personnel and current workload. All eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist. The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality Based Evaluation (QBE). Post-qualification of the highest rated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility	Until June 22, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	June 7-22, 2007
3. Submission & Opening of Eligibility Requirements	June 25, 2007

The Eligibility Screening Form will be available at the SBAC Secretariat Office, upon submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) and Application for Eligibility, and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php1,000.00 to the CDC-Cashier,

Bid Documents will be available only to short-listed bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 15,000.00 to the CDC-Cashier.

Special Bids and Awards Secretariat for
Clark Central Business District
c/o Engineering, Construction and Maintenance Department
Clark Development Corporation
3rd Floor Bldg. 2127 E. Quirino Avenue,
CDC Corporate Center, Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines 2023
Tel. Nos. (045)599-9000 local 744
E-mail: sbac@clark.com.ph Website: www.clark.com.ph

CDC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid. CDC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ERNESTO S. GOROSPE
SBAC Chairman

(PDI - June 7 & 14, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Lot No.	Name of Project/ Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Delivery to Port of Loading
1	- 1- Lot Supply, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit Automatic Folding Machine	US$ 43,479.00	Within five (5) weeks after opening of letter of credit
2	- 1 - Lot Supply, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit of Manual Laser Perforating Machine	US$ 441,305.00	Within three (3) months after opening of letter of credit
3	- 1- Lot Supply, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit of 6/6 Double Deck Sheet Fed Offset Printing Press with Rainbow Printing Device	US$ 3,913,043.00	Within six (6) months after opening of letter of credit

Prospective bidders should have undertaken similar projects within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC of the lot to be bid. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 07 June 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	22 June 2007; 2:00 P.M.
3. Opening of Bids	10 July 2007; 2:00 P.M.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount to the BSP Cashier, as follows: Item 1 – P1,000.00; Item 2 – P10,150.00; and item 3 – P 50,000.00

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – June 7, 2007)

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Cebu Pacific finalizing IPO /B6

Website: www.inquirer.net/business

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

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RP seen to strike mother lode of investments

Metal production grew to ₱17.38B in 1st quarter

By Amy R. Remo and TJ Burgonio

THE COUNTRY IS FAST BECOMING A FAVORITE of foreign mining investors—a development not lost on environment groups who called on the government Monday to bar the entry of foreign firms with poor environmental records.

Glowing prospects over the country's mining sector was shored up yesterday when Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo T. Reyes announced that the value of metallic production grew by 56 percent in the first quarter of the year to P17.38 billion, from P11.13 billion in the same period last year, due to continuing rise in world metal prices.

Reyes said growth in metallic output proves that the revitalization program for the minerals industry is on the right track, sustaining the widely anticipated boom in the mining sector next year.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau data showed that the driving force for the sustained metal price rise is the current supply and demand imbalance, where the present supply cannot keep pace with the rising demand for metals.

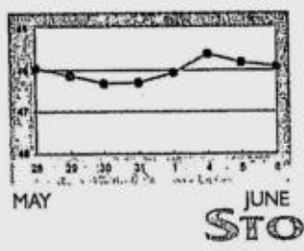
Leading minerals like nickel, silver, copper and gold continued to enjoy better prices in the first three months of 2007 as against last year. Prices were up by 180 percent, 38 percent, 18 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

At the 7th Asia Pacific Mining Conference and Exhibition, major mining companies, such as Oceana Gold Ltd., Xstrata Copper and Anglo American Exploration Phils. Inc., have all committed to pour in more investments, citing strong government support, stable fiscal and legislative conditions and rich mineral resources.

RP SEEN/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱45.92 = $1

As of 5 p.m., June 6, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.04 percent lower

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 1.04 percent lower on profit-taking following recent gains and a retreat in Wall Street overnight, dealers said.

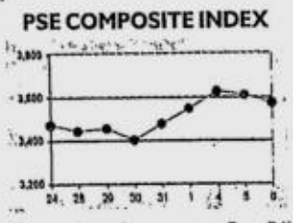
Mining stocks, however, rose amid upbeat prospects for the industry.

The composite index finished down 37.67 points at 3,570.47 after moving between 3,565.32 and 3,608.46.

The broader all-share in

SHARES/ B2

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

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DOF cites need to exempt low earners from tax

Liabilities of minimum-wage workers reported to be rising

By Michelle V. Remo

A TOP FINANCE OFFICIAL YESTERDAY cited the pressing need for a law that would exempt minimum-wage earners from the income tax.

"We (the Department of Finance) like to have that proposal enacted into law by the next Congress," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told reporters.

The need for a law exempting minimum-wage earners from paying income tax has become urgent, especially after Malacañang last year issued an executive order directing employers not to withhold the tax of their low-wage earners.

The executive order was supposed to provide temporary relief for low-income workers who had been burdened by the two-percentage-point increase in the value-added tax last year. But a law formally exempting minimum-wage earners from the income tax still has to be passed, finance officials stressed.

They explained that, in the absence of a law, minimum-wage earners still have to pay income tax. The matter has become a problem because income tax liabilities of minimum-wage earners have already accumulated following the lifting of the withholding mechanism.

Minimum-wage earners are those whose monthly salary is P5,000 or below, or whose annual salary does not exceed P60,000. Minimum-wage earners also include those whose daily pay is P325 or below.

Also covered by the withholding tax exemption are government employees with salary grades 1 to 3.

According to Teves, the government can afford to exempt minimum-wage earners from the income tax, especially now that the country's fiscal condition has been improving.

He said that, once the tax exemption is enforced, the government would stand to lose only P600 million in potential revenues a year.

Shares close 1.04 ...

From page B1

dex fell 19.96 points to 2,276.05.

There were 68 decliners and 53 advancers, while 48 stocks were unchanged.

Volume amounted to 9.6 billion shares worth P4.7 billion ($102.3 million dollars).

"It was purely a technical correction, with investors using the weakness in the US markets as an excuse to take profits," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

He predicted the market would find support at 3,500-3,520.

Top-traded Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. fell P1 to P66.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. retreated by P30 to P2,595.

Food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares rose 50 centavos to P67, but its B-shares fell P1.50 to P74.

In the mining sector, Geograce Resources Philippines Inc. was up 15 centavos at P2.65 and Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. advanced 50 centavos to P19. *AFP*

Double mining

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THREE FOREIGN MINING moguls—billionaires all—are here in Manila for the ongoing Asia-Pacific mining conference.

They are David Lowell (owner of the US firm Lowell Mineral Exploration), Owen Hegarty (managing director of the $4-billion Australian firm Oxiana Ltd.) and Dato Mohd Ajib Anuar, president of the Malaysian Chamber of Mines.

No wonder, security was tight at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel!

Nobody can tell if the world's mining moguls and their executives love to come here simply because they enjoy our sweltering weather.

To the local mining people, anyway, their presence has double meaning. Sure, mining guys never stop looking for prospects. But this cute administration of Gloriaetta is also smiling secretly over their coming over, because the Palace is dead serious in trying to "revive" the mining industry.

The Asia-Pacific conference previous to this one was also held here in Manila a little more than a year ago. You know, double in two years!

It seems the choice of conference venue has something to do with Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Phillip Romualdez.

He also happens to be the president of the Asean Federation of Mining Associations. Usually, the federation president serves for only a year. Romualdez is on his second one-year term now. The other member countries insisted on his staying.

Why is that? Let me guess: Ruffa's divorce? I really think that this country is on the way to a mining revival.

* * *

For the sake of the remaining movie stars in the Senate, Lowell Mineral Exploration has joint venture exploration programs with major mining companies in Chile, Ecuador and Mexico.

As its owner, Lowell works as a consultant for more than a hundred companies and governments in some 25 countries.

His record shows seven major "finds" so far—and still counting!

The Australian firm Oxiana, whose managing director is here, produces gold and copper from two mines in Laos.

At the moment, it is also doing exploration work in China, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

I think you can easily figure out why its managing director is here in Manila.

* * *

According to Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, mining companies have already committed P20 billion for environmental protection and management programs.

Moreover, they committed to set aside some P500 million for livelihood, educational and health programs in their mining areas.

The secretary estimates that the programs will benefit around 400 barangays.

The programs can help this cute administration defend its policy to revitalize the mining sector before the so-called "civil society."

This cute administration is targeting investments in the sector to reach $6.5 billion until Gloriaetta steps down in 2010, hopefully.

In the last two-and-a-half years, actual investments reached only $700 million.

That's $5.8 billion more to go!

* * *

The Tampakan copper and gold mines in Mindanao is the largest development project so far of the $56-billion Australian group Xstrata. That's the word from Xstrata CEO Charlie Sartain, who just gave a talk in the ongoing conference.

From what I gathered, the Tampakan mines actually cover the municipalities of Tampakan (South Cotabato), Kiblawan (Davao del Sur) and Columbio (Sultan Kudarat).

Studies done by a company called Sagittarius Mines Inc., or SMI, which is the original local claim holder, confirmed mineral resource of almost 2 billion tons, containing 11.6 million tons of copper and 14.7 million ounces of gold.

Last December, SMI received the Presidential Mining Industry Environmental Award, the highest award to be given to a mining company by the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association.

The award recognizes the efforts of mining companies in environmental protection projects and community development.

As a policy, according to Sartain, Xstrata sets aside at least one percent of its pre-tax profits for programs for the communities on its mine sites.

Xstrata thus landed last year on the roster of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index.

Companies in the index are selected based on how they integrate "long-term economic, environmental and social aspects in their business strategies while maintaining global competitiveness and brand reputation."

In short, business with a conscience!

* * *

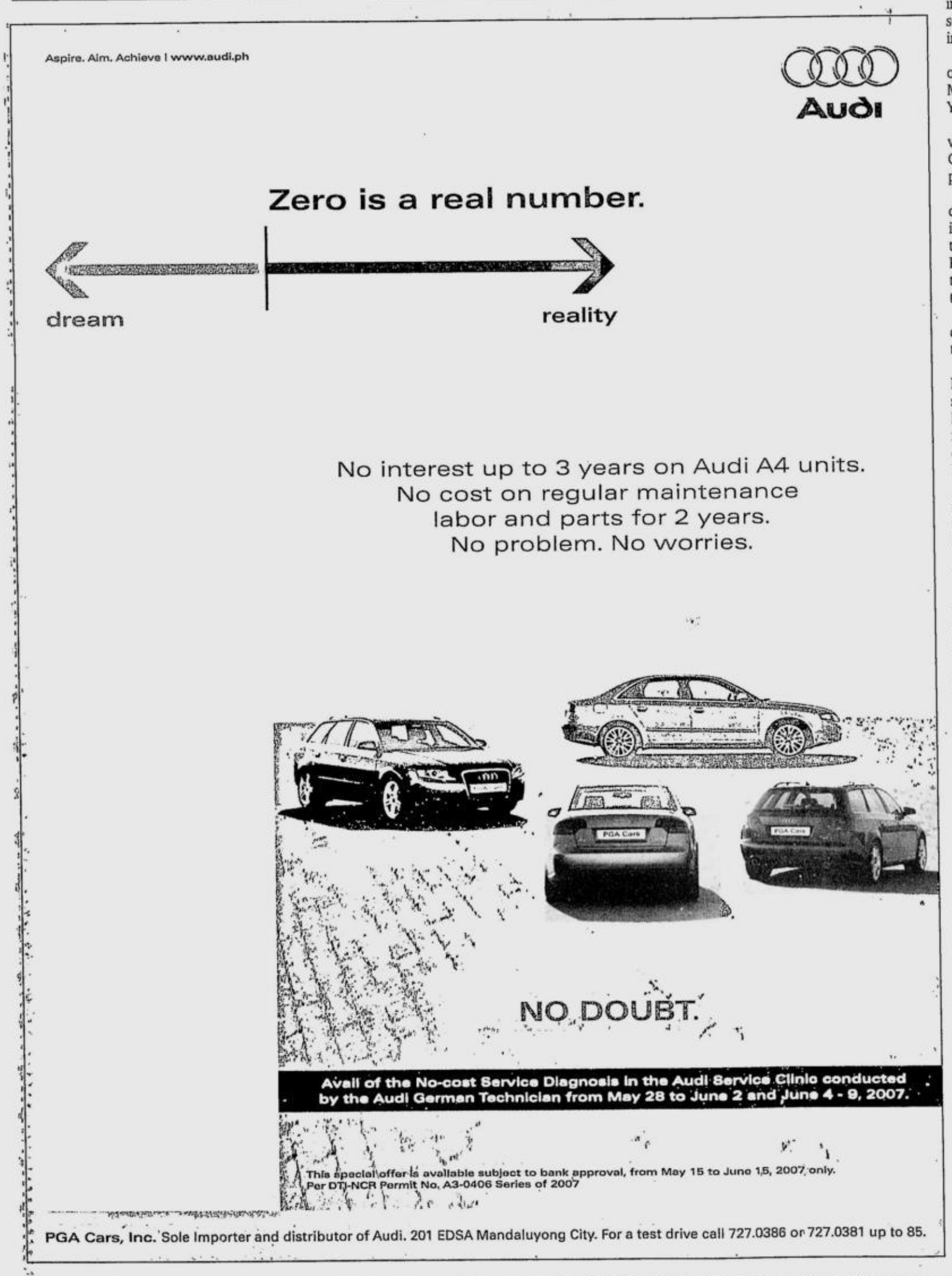
Following is the final installment the "reaction" letter from Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo:

"The Commission did not suspend licensing of new companies. D. O. No. 19-2006 issued on May 15, 2006 requires at least P1 billion to be licensed as new insurance company—an adequate capitalization to sustain public and investor confidence in the insurance industry and to be competitive regionally and globally.

"The insurance industry is not on a downtrend. Numbers do not lie. For 2006, the life insurance industry's Premium Income increased to P51.3 billion from P47 billion in 2005, or a 9.14% annual growth. The first-year-premiums rose to P17.5 billion in 2006, from P15.8 billion in 2005, or a 10.90% jump. On the other hand, the nonlife gross premiums posted 13.60% annual growth, from P28.9 billion in 2005, to P32.8 billion in 2006.

"Honorable Finance Secretary Teves did not tell anyone that IC will not implement the capital increase in 2006 and we are not suspending implementation of such increase.

"The Insurance Commission has a 10-point regulatory reform initiatives simultaneously ongoing to improve the condition of the industry not only in terms of capitalization but also observance of the 28 Insurance Core Principles of the International Association of Insurance Supervisors."



RP strikes ...

From page B1

Mining companies such as Lowell Mineral Exploration LLC has been drawn "to improving prospects in Philippine mining," according to Lowell chief executive J. David Lowell.

He said the presence of skilled Filipino miners, engineers and managers accounted for the bullish outlook for the Philippines.

"While foreign mining companies used to bring in skilled workers from overseas to the Philippines, the reverse is now true, with many foreign mining firms pirating Filipino workers for mining jobs abroad," Lowell said.

There are now 18 operating mines in the country, 15 cement plants and quarries, one nickel processing plant, one copper smelter and more than 2,000 quarries and small-scale mining operations. Currently in the pipeline are 23 mining development projects and 41 exploration projects.

Last year, gross production value from mining amounted to about $1.3 billion.

Oceana Gold CEO Stephen Orr said that the firm has earmarked $5 million for exploration work alone and is expecting to spend $155 to $170 million to develop its Didipio copper-gold resource.

Anglo American president and exploration manager Patrick Walters also said that the firm's exploration expenses tripled to $4.5 million in 2006 from $1.5 million in 2005.

Walters said they expect expenses to double to $9.5 million this year as the company continues to acquire interests in mining tenements.

According to Horacio C. Ramos, director of Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the government is "bullish about prospects for an industry takeoff next year, but cautious of the challenges that come with increasing mining activities."

"The government believes that mining—for as long as it is done responsibly—can be pro-people and pro-environment in creating wealth and improving the quality of life of the Filipinos," he added.

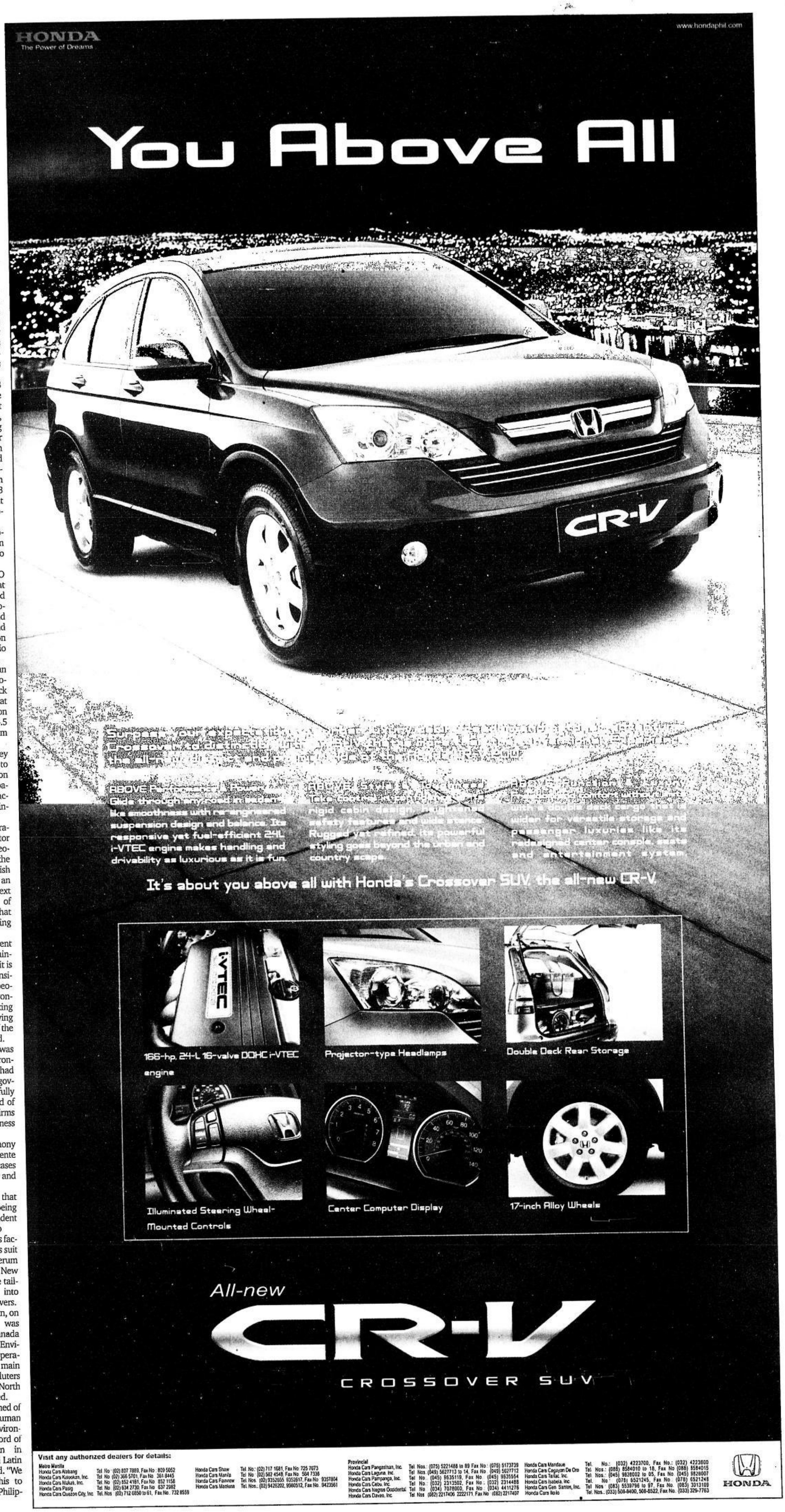
Ramos' stand was echoed by environment groups that had been urging the government to carefully vet the background of foreign mining firms wanting to do business in the country.

Defend Patrimony convenor Clemente Bautista cited the cases of BHP Billiton and Anglo-American.

Bautista said that BHP Billiton was being wooed by President Macapagal-Arroyo even though it was facing $4-billion class suit filed by the Ninerum people of Papua New Guinea over mine tailings that flowed into Fly and Ok Tedi rivers.

Anglo-American, on the other hand, was named by the Canada Commission for Environmental Cooperation as one of the main toxic lead polluters throughout North America, he added.

"We have learned of this notorious human rights and environmental track record of Anglo American in South Africa and Latin America," he said. "We do not want this to happen in the Philippines."



Cost of sending remittances to RP going down, says BSP

More OFWs now prefer to tap banks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS SAID the adoption of advanced technology in financial services had helped reduce the cost of sending foreign exchange remittances through banks.

In a primer on matters concerning overseas Filipino workers, the BSP noted a substantial reduction in the cost of sending remittances to the Philippines from the United States, United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Singapore.

"Remittance companies heeded the call of the BSP to make the delivery of remittances faster, safer and more efficient. Remittance channels have improved because of the adoption of advanced systems and new technologies," the BSP said.

Data from the primer showed that transferring $400 from one's bank account in the United States to another account in the same bank here in the Philippines would now cost between $7.09 and $11.59. In 2001, the same transaction would have cost the sender between $8 and $12.

The BSP also said transferring $600 from one's bank account in the United Kingdom to another account in the same bank in the Philippines would now cost between $7.85 to $11.73. Six years ago, the same transaction would have cost the sender between $9.48 and $13.96.

From Hong Kong to the Philippines, remitting $200 would now cost only $3.11 to $7.45. In 2001, this would have cost $3.92 to $5.85.

The BSP said technological services adopted by remittance companies included Internet banking, phone banking and banking through the use of short messaging.

In the past, the BSP had been calling on banks and non-bank remittance companies to trim the cost of money transfers, which were said to be burdensome for the OFWs and their families.

OFWs have been credited for helping boost the economy. The increasing remittances to their families were said to have increased household consumption that led to growth in aggregate demand.

The BSP earlier said it was expecting OFW remittances to grow by 5 percent this year to $14.7 billion from last year's $14 billion, as the number of OFWs are expected to further increase this year.

The rise in OFW remittances is also credited for the appreciation of the peso, which recently broke into the 45-to-$1 territory to hit its highest level in more than six years.

IPR training center launched

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE yesterday launched a training center as it pushed for the commercialization of "intangible assets," which experts said would help bring out all the potentials and real values of various businesses and economic activities.

Dubbed Intellectual Property Research and Training Institute (IPRTI), the training center is envisioned to be the center of IP education in the country and in the region.

Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., IP Philippines Director General, said education on IP was one of the drivers of national development and inculcating this in the consciousness of Filipinos would help foster creativity.

Cristobal said the emphasis on IP education as a means to disseminate the importance of IP rights to promote creativity, innovation and competitiveness was among the directives of Malacañang.

Also, the IPRTI's launch marked IP Philippines' activities to celebrate the 10th year of the Intellectual Property Code.

"When IP (creators)—scientists, inventors, academics, business owners, artists and those in the creative industries—are informed of their rights, they protect and benefit from their creations," the lawyer said.

Ramon L. Clarete, technical director of Economic Modernization through Efficient Reforms and Governance Enhancement (Emerge), said Philippine companies have yet to maximize the benefits of IP.

Emerge is a contractor engaged with the US Agency for International Development, which has worked closely with IP Philippines in IP education and training among government officials, academicians and other stakeholders.

"We have, for example, a study that shows that the sale of a bakeshop to a fast food chain was undervalued because the (bakeshop's) worth as a trademark was not played up," said Clarete, who is also an economics professor at the University of the Philippines.

Boom in Internet TV seen

By Riza T. Olchondra

ABS-CBN BROADCASTING CORP. SEES A boom in Internet TV services, which it is selling in monthly and pay-per-view subscription packages, network chair and CEO Eugenio Lopez III told reporters.

"We expect the Internet to be where our audience would watch most of our content in the coming years because of its ability to provide content whenever, wherever," Lopez said.

The media conglomerate's Internet-based video-on-demand service, ABS-CBNnow!, has about 60,000 subscribers worldwide.

Most of them are in the United States and the United Kingdom. The rest are in Japan, the Philippines and other markets.

ABS-CBN aims at hitting P1 billion in net income this year.

Lopez said the company had earmarked about P1.5 billion in capital pending this year for maintenance of its products and services and another P1 billion for its digital TV, which will be launched by the fourth quarter.

The network will also install about one million DTV boxes, mainly in Southern Luzon, where signal reception of Channel 2 is weak. DTV subscription will cost a consumer P1,000 in one-time payment.

Fil-Estate, Megaworld to form joint venture

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PROPERTY FIRMS FIL-ESTATE Land Inc. and Megaworld Corp. have agreed in principle to form a strategic alliance through a co-development deal for the Twin Lakes Project, a 730-hectare leisure and tourism project at the Taal Ridge in Laurel, Batangas.

The agreement is expected to be finalized upon the completion of due diligence procedures.

Under the deal, a new entity will be created to pursue the development of the said Batangas property. The arrangement will also involve other members of the Fil-Estate group such as Fil-Estate Properties Inc. and Fil-Estate Management Inc.

The two parties—Fil-Estate and Megaworld—or their affiliates will infuse an initial capital of P2 billion in the form of property and cash into the new company. The new company will also issue preferred shares to raise P3 billion.

Also, Fil-Estate Land will issue stock warrants entitling Megaworld to subscribe to one billion new shares of Fil-Estate at an exercise price of P1.25 a share within five years from the issue date of the warrants.

"We are very confident that Megaworld and Fil-Estate can collaborate closely to forge a successful partnership starting with the Twin Lakes Project. We believe Fil-Estate's strengths in the area of land banking, tourism or leisure development and marketing will complement Megaworld's liquidity, its urban development capability, strong products and capital markets performance," Fil-Estate Land chair Robert John Sobrepena said in a statement.

200,000 taxpayers seen applying for amnesty

THE TAX AMNESTY LAW IS expected to attract 150,000 to 200,000 tax delinquents into applying for compromise settlements.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue, in consultation with officials of the Department of Finance and some legislators, are drafting the law's implementing rules and regulations (IRR). It expects to complete the draft before the Aug. 15 deadline.

The law is aimed at encouraging tax delinquents to come out in the open and pay amnesty fees, and in the process enable the government to generate more revenue.

It is also intended to pave the way for the inclusion in the BIR database of tax-delinquent individuals and businesses that are not yet registered with the revenue agency.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said expanding the BIR's database was an important way of improving the BIR's tax collection in the future. He said there was a need to update the BIR's taxpayers database, which was not reflective of the true number of taxpayers.

Beltran said there were only 2 million individual taxpayers in the BIR database, much lower than the 34 million employed as recorded in the National Statistics Office. He, however, noted that the NSO record covered even those who earn below minimum wage levels, and therefore not required to pay income tax. *Michelle V. Remo*

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:
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The Bid Documents will be available at the Procurement Department at the 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila starting June 7, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,900.00.
The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at Procurement Department Conference Room at 10:00 AM, June 14, 2007. Bidding for the above requirement is scheduled on June 27, 2007 at 1:00 PM.
Please address your queries to the Head-Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, or call 405-7370; 551-0000 locals 2290 & 2293.
LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).
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(PDI – June 7, 2007)

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INVITATION TO BID
The National Agricultural and Fishery Council (NAFC) hereby invites sealed bids for the sale of 15,607 metric tons of ammonium sulphate fertilizer with shipment date on or before August 15, 2007 under the 2KR Grant Assistance for Underprivileged Farmers.
Bid documents shall be available for issuance starting June 6, 2007 from NAFC BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).
For purposes of clarification, a pre-bid conference will be held on June 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the Apacible Conference Room, Apacible Hall, DA Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
Fully completed sealed bids should be submitted not later than 2:00 p.m. on June 12, 2007. Bids submitted after the scheduled time will not be accepted.
For inquiries, please contact Ms. Floreliz P. Avellana at Tel. Nos 929-8234 and 920-3992.
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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE JUANITA DE JESUS LAO WAS EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED AMONG HER HEIRS AS PER DOC. NO. 163, PAGE 34, BOOK NO. III, SERIES OF 2007 OF NOTARY PUBLIC RAMON L. CARPIO OF PASIG CITY.
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OBITUARIES

DR. SOCORRO DU-SANTOS
"Coring"

peacefully joined her Creator on June 3, 2007 at the age 87.

Her remains lie in state at Nuestra Señora Della Strada Parish, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be tomorrow, June 8, 2007 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the San Lorenzo Ruiz Chapel of the said parish.

The bereaved family invites you to visit Mama Coring's remains daily from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 m.n.

ANTONIO LOPEZ LAS MARIAS
of Rosario, La Union

Died on June 4, 2007

He is survived by his wife, **Lorena Cornel Las Marias**, and daughters, **Lorraine Antonnete** and **Loren Ellinore**.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at # 49 Mc Arthur Hi-way Pob. West, Rosario, La Union.

Interment will be on June 17, 2007. Mass will be held at UCCP, Rosario, La Union.

ERRATUM
In the Message of Thanks advertisement of the family of the late
Engr. Rommel Tadeo Casin
that appeared on the obituary section on June 3, 2007, date of death should have read May 6, 2007 and not as published.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (I.D.)

More Classified Ads

National Transmission Corporation Page A3
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Korean Embassy Page A24
Clark Development Corporation Page A24
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Page A24

Banks posted slight decline in real estate loans in Q1

Ratio to total loans also down to 10.74%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S COMMERCIAL AND UNIversal banks have reported a slight drop in their outstanding real estate loans in the first quarter of the year, compared with year-ago level.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said the outstanding loans reached P184.5 billion in the first three months of the year, 0.97 percent lower than the P186.3 billion posted a year ago. This resulted in a decline in the ratio of real estate loans to the banks' total outstanding loan portfolio to 10.74 percent from year-ago's 11.64 percent.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the first three-month figure this year was 7.2 percent lower than the P198.91 billion recorded in October to December last year.

"Several banks posted reductions in their RELs (real estate loans) during the quarter, mostly due to payments made by borrowers and the disposal of delinquent RELs under Phase II of the Special Purpose Vehicle Law," the BSP said in a statement.

The SPVL, which was extended for two more years last year, grants tax perks to transactions involving the sale of nonperforming assets of banks to asset management firms.

The law, which was pushed by the BSP and the entire banking sector, was intended to address the banking system's huge amount of bad assets.

The BSP said 80.4 percent of the real estate loans in the quarter went to commercial infrastructure projects, while the remaining 19.6 percent went to individual borrowers.

It also said that the banks' past due real estate loans reached P19.99 billion, or 10.8 percent of total outstanding real estate loans in the first quarter.

In the meantime, commercial and universal banks' investments in stocks and commercial papers issued by real estate firms hit P25.5 billion in the first quarter, up 50 percent from year ago's P16.98 billion.

Monetary authorities said the rise in investments in equity and commercial papers was an indication of rising confidence in the real estate sector.

PNOC-EC seeks financial adviser, lead arranger

By Abigail L. Ho

FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF ITS PRIVAtization plan by parent firm Philippine National Oil Co., PNOC Exploration Corp. is looking for a financial adviser that will help the company start the process.

In a bid invitation issued yesterday, PNOC-EC privatization committee chair Edgardo del Fonso said the prospective financial adviser/lead arranger/underwriter should have ample experience in equity offerings.

It should also have a track record in working with the Philippine government, either as an adviser for privatization or as an arranger bank for financing.

Another criterion, he said, was the firm's experience in lead-managing public equity offerings and arranging equity sales, in Asia and in other parts of the world.

The firm should also be willing to deploy to the country a dedicated team with solid experience in oil and gas or coal projects.

"(The) prospective financial adviser/lead arranger/underwriter/global coordinator must meet all of the criteria," Del Fonso said.

Interested entities can secure eligibility documents from the PNOC-EC privatization committee from June 6-15. They are given until June 19 to submit the completed documents.

A short list of three to seven firms would be drawn up, Del Fonso said, based on the following rating system: Applicable experience of the firm in equity offering (40 percent); applicable experience of the firm in oil, gas and coal projects (30 percent); and qualification of members of the transaction team, including their education, work experience and number of years in the firm (30 percent).

Only companies included in the short list would be allowed to submit bids, he said. Eligible bidders would be notified in writing by July 3.

PNOC-EC registered a net income of P2.6 billion last year, amid a slight decline in its revenues.

According to company data, 95.6 percent of its profit came from its 10-percent interest in the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project.

Last year's sales revenues fell 7 percent to P6.2 billion from P6.5 billion in 2005, mainly because of the significant reduction in PNOC-EC's "cost recovery" from its Malampaya investments.

PNOC-EC's cost recovery entitlement dropped to only P2.4 billion in 2006 from P4.1 billion the previous year.

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Balanced	Fixed-income and stocks	19.1%	10.0%	34.3%	75.9%	86.3%
Philippine Equity	Primarily stocks	20.2%	11.3%	44.0%	92.7%	110.3%

Please note that these figures only indicate past performance over the given periods and do not necessarily indicate future returns.
*Period is from December 31, 2003 to December 31, 2006.
**Period is from December 31, 2003 to March 31, 2007.

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BUSINESS

Cebu Pacific finalizing IPO

By Elizabeth Sanchez- Lacson

BUDGET AIRLINE CEBU PACIFIC OF taipan John Gokongwei Jr. is finalizing plans to conduct an initial public offering this year.

In its initial registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Cebu Pacific said it planned to offer 83.75 to 178.66 million new shares plus 61.9 million shares held by existing shareholders.

Underwriters tapped for the offering are investment banks UBS, ING and First Metro Investment Corp.

The company said that it stands to gain between P4.6 billion and P9.8 billion from the IPO, assuming that the shares will be sold at the lower end of its target offer price of P56.12 a share.

Cebu Pacific is selling part of its shares to help fund an aggressive fleet expansion, Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei said earlier.

Gokongwei had said the group would acquire 14 planes in a $250-million deal, on top of plans to more than double its fleet capacity by 2013 at a cost of $1.3 billion.

Cebu Pacific, touted as the low fare leader in the Philippines, entered the market on March 1996 and pioneered the "low fare, great value" strategy in the local aviation industry.

Cebu Pacific launched its international operations in November 2001 and is now flying to Bangkok, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Taipei.

It now operates a fleet of 14 Airbus A319 and A320 aircraft, the youngest fleet in the Philippines with a fleet age of one year.

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ICTSI unit takes over Ecuador terminals

By Riza T. Olchondra

A UNIT OF INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. has signed a 20-year contract to manage and operate the container and multipurpose terminals at the Port of Guayaquil in Ecuador.

Under the terms, ICTSI's Ecuadorian unit, Contecon Guayaquil S.A (CGSA), will pay Autoridad Portuario de Guayaquil (APG), the port authority of Guayaquil, a premium of $30 million over the next four years at $6 million a year.

The first $6 million was already paid when the concession deal was signed last May 31. There is also a fixed yearly fee during the 20-year term.

ICTSI is set to invest $80 million for equipment and infrastructure in the first year of the concession, which will total $170 million over the first three years.

ICTSI was declared the winner of the bid to manage the Port of Guayaquil in March this year. ICTSI and its international subsidiary, ICTSI Ltd., established Contecon Guayaquil S.A. as a special purpose company for this project.

APG has until Sept. 13 this year to turn over the terminals to ICTSI, but CGSA is expected to take over the terminals and start operations as early as July 1.

The terminals handle containerized cargo and general and bulk cargo. In 2006, the Port of Guayaquil, located on the west coast of South America and Ecuador's main port, handled 600,000 twenty-foot container equivalent units of cargo.

The container and multipurpose terminals at Guayaquil in Ecuador is the latest addition to ICTSI's growing portfolio of international terminals.

Early this year, ICTSI took over operations of the Yantai Gangtong Terminal in China.

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REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS

Group readies RP-made auto

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP OF LOCAL automotive parts makers yesterday said that its Philippine Utility Vehicle or PhUV would be launched on June 12.

"Finally, the PhUV- '*ang tunay na sasakyang* Pinoy' (the true Filipino vehicle) would finally be unveiled on the same day the country celebrates its Independence Day," said Ferdinand Raquelsantos, director of the Philippine Parts Makers Association of the Philippines.

"MVPMAP hopes this will be an omen of more good things to come," he added.

The PhUV prototype was assembled out of parts contributed by MVPMAP members and financed partly by a consortium of MVPMAP officials.

"Its design and specifications have long been kept under wraps and became the subject of much speculations both on and off the Internet," he said.

MVPMAP said in a statement that the production of the PhUV was expected to help some 50,000 workers in the auto industry keep their jobs given the increase in importation of completely built up units and slow sales.

Raquelsantos, who heads the association's PhUV technical working group, said that wherever applicable, parts with Philippine Standard marks would be used to ensure quality.

PS marks, granted by the Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Product Standards, certify that the goods were made according to specifications that are considered of standard quality.

The PhUV is an AUV-based vehicle locally designed and assembled from completely-knocked down kits, which would thus have a high level of value-added local parts and labor, Raquelsantos said.

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CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

FIRST METRO SAVE & LEARN EQUITY FUND, INC.
- Registrant -
Registration of Securities

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that an Amended Registration Statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 24, 2007, on behalf of **FIRST METRO SAVE & LEARN EQUITY FUND, INC.** for the registration of **One Hundred Fifty Million (150,000,000)** common shares with the par value of One Peso (1.00) each, or an aggregate value of **One Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (P150,000,000)** representing the latest increase in its authorized capital stock.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation.

NAME	POSITION
Antonio M. Bernardo[1]	Acting Chairman/Independent Director
Edwin B. Valeroso	President/Director
Bro. Manuel V. De Leon, FMS	Director
Gloria C. Garovillo	Independent Director
Danilo G. Olondriz	Chief Financial Officer
Atty. Nimfa B. Pastrana	Corporate Secretary
Marie Arabella D. Veron	Treasurer
Jonathan T. Tabac	Compliance Officer

Said Amended Registration Statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, may be furnished every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

[1] Mr. Antonio M. Bernardo has been designated as the Acting Chairman in the view of Mr. Victor C. Macalincag's resignation last October 10. The 5th director will be elected in the coming annual stockholders' meeting

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 6, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.1	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	900
71	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	67.5	67.5	66.5	66.5	710,300
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	68.5	69	68.5	68.5	3,598,300
935	630	China Banking Corp.	895	895	895	895	1,560
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	590,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	67.5	67.5	65.5	66	5,421,100
56.5	30.5	Philippine National Bank	53	53	51.5	51.5	332,300
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63	64	63	64	1,700
39.57	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	1,196,300
90	41	Security Bank Corp	82	82	80.5	81	673,900
66	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	63.5	64	63.5	64	224,700
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
0.85	0.6	Bankard Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.6	0.61	990,000
8.3	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	8.3	8.3	8	8.2	1,183,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	38	38	38	38	200
1,800.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,680.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	310
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.25	7,638,000
2.9	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.85	218,000
1,005.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	645	645	645	645	1,000
1.94	1.08	Wealthy Capital Corp	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	1,254,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
64.5	41	First Gen Corp	63.5	64	63	64	1,940,200
88	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	86	86	85.5	85.5	1,920,500
12.75	6.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	12.25	12.5	12	12	6,684,000
102	13.5	Manila Electric Company A	98	99	97	97	186,900
104	20.25	Manila Electric Company B	98	99	97.5	97.5	866,000
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.1	22,444,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	5,128,000
2.38	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.36	2.36	2.32	2.32	170,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	1,858,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.2	5.5	5.2	5.4	187,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.18	2.2	775,000
2.75	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	1.7	2	1.6	1.6	63,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	55,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	57.5	57.5	56	56	91,900
7	3.5	Pancake House Inc.	7	7	7	7	100,000
1.62	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.46	537,000
4.05	2.2	Roxas Holdings	2.3	2.32	2.3	2.3	117,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	66.5	67.5	66.5	67	57,600
88	68.5	San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	75.5	74	74	76,600
0.51	0.2	Swift Foods Inc	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	200,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	15.75	16.25	15.75	16.25	20,085,300
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.8	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.7	3,420,000
4.6	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	75,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	1,075,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	5.3	5.8	5.3	5.8	900,000
2	0.745	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.88	1.88	1.78	1.84	10,018,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.6	2,862,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.74	120,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.95	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.75	3.6	3.75	308,000
0.11	0.022	AJD Net Holdings Inc.	0.09	0.11	0.09	0.1	449,000,000
1.14	0.17	APC Group Inc.	1	1.04	0.98	0.98	34,440,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. A	1.86	2.02	1.86	1.9	320,000
3.3	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. B	2	2.2	2	2.2	60,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	19,100,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9	9	9	9	1,029,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.016	1,096,000,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.87	0.91	0.87	0.9	2,330,000
2.75	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.5	2.55	7,704,000
12	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Company Inc. A	12	12	12	12	4,000
570	272.92	Ayala Corp.	550	555	545	550	88,410
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	55,000
5.2	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.95	5	4.9	4.95	8,497,000
9.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.5	1,719,000
6.7	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	1,343,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	105,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75	353,800
2.7	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	11,000
0.47	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.44	1,710,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.66	0.72	0.65	0.71	3,590,000
21	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	18.75	21	18.75	20.5	3,749,600
7.4	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	7.1	7.4	6.6	7	35,465,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	79,000
0.03	0.009	Pacifica Inc. A	0.028	0.03	0.025	0.027	514,400,000
1.26	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1.14	1	1.08	370,000
0.63	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.57	2,400,000
450	205	SM Investments Corp.	445	445	430	430	211,920
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.72	1.8	355,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.62	0.63	55,190,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	550,000
1.6	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6	1,741,000
0.35	0.08	Welltex Industries Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	8,540,000
0.58	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Company Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	1,821,000
0.62	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.56	0.62	0.56	0.61	1,270,000
17.5	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	17.25	17.25	17	17.25	19,176,300
1.76	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.72	1.76	1.68	1.7	25,545,000
4.5	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	4.05	4.15	4	4.1	1,662,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	3,290,000
2	1.2	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp. A	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	497,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	10,000
0.67	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	6,140,000
0.6	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	9,750,000
3.1	0.72	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.82	0.79	0.82	20,220,000
0.31	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.29	14,290,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc	0.93	1.04	0.93	1	54,800,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	2	2	1.96	1.98	60,974,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	400,000
1.8	0.74	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	27,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.4	2,550,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.77	0.79	3,550,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4.15	4.15	4	4	18,458,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	150,000
0.42	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.35	0.36	10,460,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.63	0.64	0.62	0.62	22,420,000
4.1	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4	4	4	4	2,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	19.75	20	19.75	20	172,000
5.4	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	1,718,000
14	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	12,111,900
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.78	0.8	0.77	0.77	8,420,000
0.35	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	20,400,000
1.74	0.3	Zeta Land Holdings Inc	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	1,312,000
		MEDIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.1	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc	1.56	1.56	1.52	1.54	5,521,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,440.00	1,445.00	1,425.00	1,445.00	58,270
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co	2,600.00	2,615.00	2,590.00	2,595.00	83,640
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp	7	7	6.9	7	887,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	13,620,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.6	8.7	8.4	8.7	36,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.6	1,944,000
0.0525	0.0263	ISM Communications Corp.	0.046	0.047	0.045	0.046	36,500,000
0.043	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.041	0.042	0.038	0.039	63,900,000
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.18	2.18	2.16	2.16	179,000
0.08	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0725	0.08	0.07	0.0775	169,000,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.66	1.6	1.66	540,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	101,400,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.28	1,723,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Air21 Transport System Corp	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	100,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	155,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc	28.5	29	28	28	2,066,800
2.14	0.96	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	175,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	1,395,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	15,000
0.94	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.86	0.94	0.85	0.89	30,660,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.08	7,476,000
		EDUCATION					
9.8	7.2	Centro Escolar University	8	8	7.9	7.9	3,000
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	91,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	25.5	26	25.5	26	3,100
5.2	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	5	5	4.95	4.95	1,283,000
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	16.5	16.75	16.5	16.75	619,700
30	9.5	Pryce Inc	25	25	24.75	25	368,000
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Atlas Mining and Industrial Corp	0.014	0.015	0.013	0.014	2,995,300,000
7.6	3	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.5	1,151,000
7.7	3	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.6	242,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	18.75	19.5	18.75	19	7,103,500
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.5	16,800
4	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	3.6	4	3.6	3.7	701,000
2.75	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.55	2.75	2.55	2.65	107,203,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	3,760,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1,390,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.036	443,100,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.038	451,400,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	393,500,000
6.4	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	6	6.1	6	6.1	8,393,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	27	27	27,900
1.24	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	6,100,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.44	1.52	1.44	1.5	9,069,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.42	5,780,000
0.022	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	354,500,000
0.024	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	270,600,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10.25	10	10.25	42,600
0.027	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.025	0.027	0.025	0.027	1,337,000,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHINISTOCK

CURRENCIES

June 6, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.739481	1.000000	45.7210
Japan	Yen	0.006092	0.008238	0.3766
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473859	1.993100	91.1265
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094707	0.128072	5.8556
Switzerland	Franc	0.607177	0.821085	37.5408
Canada	Dollar	0.695982	0.941176	43.0315
Singapore	Dollar	0.483321	0.653595	29.8830
Australia	Dollar	0.618657	0.836610	38.2506
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.961644	2.652731	121.2855
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197190	0.266660	12.1920
Brunei	Dollar	0.481747	0.651466	29.7857
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000114	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.022518	0.030451	1.3923
UAE	Dirham	0.201351	0.272287	12.4492
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.352300	61.8285
Korea	Won	0.000798	0.001079	0.0493
China	Yuan**	0.096775	0.130869	5.9835
Argentina	Peso	0.240873	0.325733	14.8928
Brazil	Real	0.381825	0.516342	23.6077
Denmark	Kroner	0.134297	0.181610	8.3034
India	Rupee	0.018386	0.024863	1.1368
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217271	0.293815	13.4335
Mexico	New Peso	0.068445	0.092558	4.2318
New Zealand	Dollar	0.555041	0.750582	34.3174
South Africa	Rand	0.103946	0.140566	6.4268
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022402	0.030294	1.3851

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—June 5, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of June 5, 2007

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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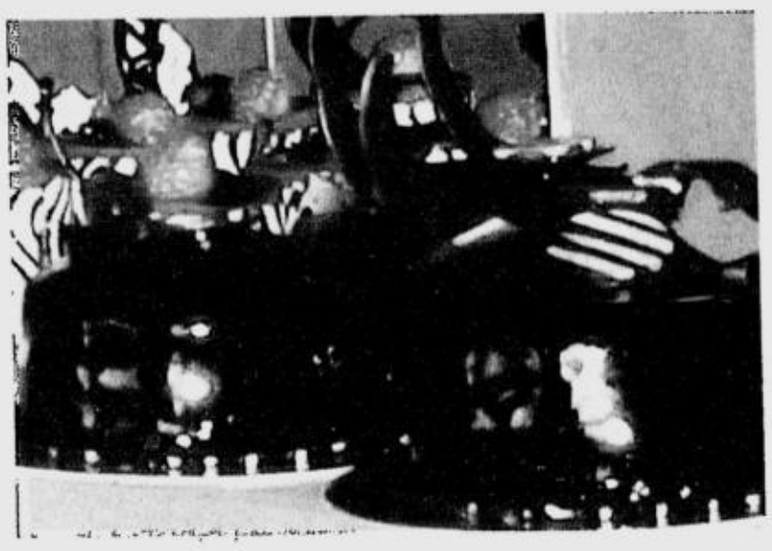
IN THIS ISSUE

Cooking by champions/C2



EENIE MEENIE MINI MO. If you were to choose, what would it be? Fat—Mango Charlotte, thin—Tuna Chunks in Water, fat—Chocolata

KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

3-day diet works like a charm

WHAT OTHER RACE, apart from ours, could come up with so many variations of a word? Or how could one word morph into several things that mean the same?

Case in point:

Taba—tabachoy, tabaching-ching, baching-ching, ching-ching, tabachino, bachoy, tabachoy, tababoy, choy-tabats (c/o Quito José), *Dabiana*

Payat—payatot, palito, kalansay, buto, ting-ting, tiki, butiki, butiking Pasay (though my friend says Pasig. So Pasay or Pasig, it's up to you! Hahaha!)

Only we Pinoys can do as we do. A gloriously zany bunch of people we are, indeed!

Seriously, who does not have a weight issue? Most of us, myself included, have gone from *baching-ching* to *palito* and back!

It's all about choices! Fat or thin? To be or not to be is entirely up to you!

O, doon muna tayo sa madali, sa masarap muna!

Mango dessert

I love mangoes and this is the season for them. Aside from mango cream pie and mango torte, do you know where to get other new mango desserts?

NERI LEE

The best mango dessert I've had recently was Cristina Santiago's Mango Charlotte. She does elegant dessert buffets, too! Oh, and if you haven't tried her Chocolata, you must! Call 0928-5025027.

Can you tell me where I can buy the best rum cake and Brazo de Mercedes?

SYLVIE

Speaking of rum cake, if there is anyone we must pay tribute to for this cake's popularity, it is Sandy Romualdez, the woman who started the rum-cake craze in the country. Unfortunately, she is no longer with us. But her legacy, that is, her rum-cake recipe, lives on through her sister Jinggay. Call 8260552 or 0917-4182924

Brazo? Hands down, and I'm sure you'll agree, Mrs. Vargas' is the best! Call 8107529.

Frozen Brazo—For a twist on the classic, if you have not yet tried Dimpy Camara's Frozen Brazo, you must! It's so good! Aside from the classic, she also makes frozen *brazo* in chocolate-banana! Call 8438086.

I am a mother of five boys. It's back-to-school time. Do you have a *masarap* pimiento recipe *pang*-sandwich. *Sawa na sila sa gawa ko,* and any suggestions for cookies aside from Oreo *na lagi na lang baon ng mga anak ko*? Please not expensive *sana*!

LITA

Sure do! Have you ever tried the Dewberry Cookies, the Blueberry and Strawberry? So *masarap*. Proudly made by Jack & Jill! It can compete with the Marks & Spencer's Jam Cookies that cost a fortune! The must-try local cookies cost less than P5 a pack, I think. My son Diego is crazy about them!

This is my Cheese Pimiento recipe. Hope the boys like it!

Cheese Pimiento

In a bowl, with a whisk, whip ½ c cream cheese and ¼ c butter. Add 2½ c grated cheddar cheese, ½ c roasted bell pepper, ¼ c condensed milk, 2 tbsp sugar, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well to combine.

There are so many more discoveries but will save those for next week.

Now on to *pasakit*!

Help me lose weight. I will be a *ninang* on the 30th of this month. You have a diet that really works? Really love you and your column!

ALEX

And I love you right back Alex! Thank you!

As far as this diet goes, I swear by it! It works like a charm. I have Margarita to thank for sharing this with me. I lost seven pounds and two inches on the first try. My sister Babot cheated yet lost five!

Don't want to prepare the meals yourself? Sostanza will deliver the diet to your

3-DAY/ C2

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3F RCBC Bldg.	2F Regina	6F Panorama	Basement 1&2	27F Atlanta Ctr.	GF Zeta Bldg.	6F Adriatico Square
Zapote-Alabang Rd.	Garden II	Bldg. Rizal Ave.	Ayala Center	#31 Annapolis	Salcedo St.	Adriatico, Manila
809-0395	242-1312	365-7653	231-3254	726-6505	893-8935	536-0619

MEGAMALL	PASAY ROAD	PASIG	SM NORTH	SUBIC	H.V. DELA COSTA
Ruby/Toni	Val/Maan/Kalzy	Abbie/Haidee/Mitch	Michelle/Sarah	Beth	Emily/Chat
2F Bldg. A	1032 Arnaiz Ave.	Restaurant Ave.	Lower Ground Flr.	2F Times Square	28F Trafalgar Plaza
Mandaluyong	cor. Hernandez St.	Marcos Hi-Way	Main Bldg. SM North	Rizal Hi-Way	H.V. Dela Costa
631-3869	887-1335	681-5333	926 42 15	252-6514	814-0138

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MALATE: Yvette / Gein 525 98 91 / 0921 466 94 23 PASAY ROAD: Kathy 887 35 30 / 0915 689 30 88 PASIG: Jihan / Gladys 647 38 16 / 0928 4763108
H.V.DELA COSTA: Emily/Chat 814 0138 SM NORTH: Sarah 926 42 15 / 0905 269 07 17

The joyful—and winning—recipes

By Reggie Aspiras

LAST THURSDAY'S "KITCHEN RESCUE" COLUMN, "We Got Gold," generated a deluge of letters that spoke of pride, joy and happiness for what our culinary team achieved.

Funny but during the victory party held on the same day, everyone, including the team, kept telling me: "Reggie, *tama na kami* next week, *ha*?"

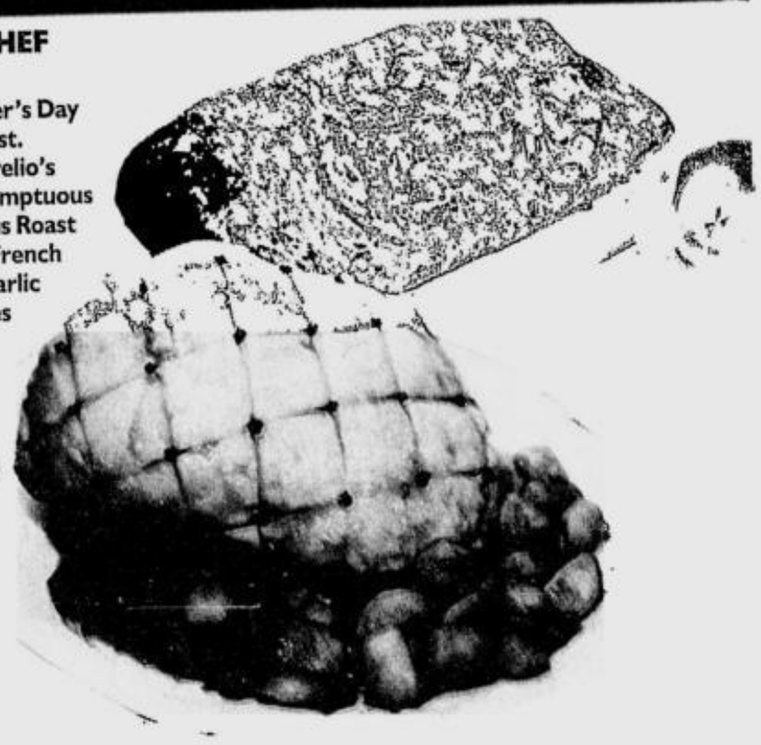
But how does one contain such emotion? Joy is doubled when it is shared and joy must be sung, and it must be sung out loud. Remember, "Joy to the World"?

So today we are featuring some of what I fondly call the "joyful recipes," the exact same ones that helped us bag the gold but only choosing those that you can manage to do even at home!

On behalf of chefs Ariel Manuel, J. Gamboa, Buddy Trinidad, Arnold Guevarra, Tony Bleza and Boy Timola, and all of us in the profession who bask in the team's glory, allow us to say thank you for being there for us, for your unwavering faith and support and, most especially, for all your prayers!

Mabuhay po kayong lahat!

Oh, by the way, let me share a little secret. The team is off to compete in Malaysia soon!



FATHER'S DAY CHEF SUGGESTIONS

Make this year's Father's Day truly a memorable feast. Chef Eli Aurelio of Aurelio's Catering offers two sumptuous delicacies: Black Angus Roast Rib-Eye, served with French creamy spinach and garlic chive mashed potatoes with Au Jus sauce and Honey-baked Virginia Pork Loin or Leg of Ham with candied sweet potatoes. Call 7267321, 7269329 or 0920-92018883.

Poached Jumbo Shrimp and Scallops, Caramelized Papaya, Cilantro and Lime

To poach the shrimp and scallop:
250 ml olive oil
3 cloves garlic
3 pc onion
½ l lime juice
4 l chicken stock
30 pc shrimps (jumbo)
30 pc scallops
5 g coriander seeds
5 g mustard seeds
Salt and pepper

- In saucepan, brown garlic in olive oil.
- Add onion, coriander seeds, mustard seeds.
- Add lime juice and chicken stock.
- Season and bring to a boil.
- Place prawn and scallops in a bowl and pour hot mixture over. Let stand 10-15 minutes until cooked through.
- Once cooked, refrigerate and allow mixture to cool in poaching liquid.
- When shrimps are cool, strain the liquid from them, then peel and de-vein them.
- Keep chilled.

Caramelized Papaya:

- Peel and dice papaya into large pieces.
- Top with sugar then blowtorch until golden brown.

Assembly:

- Season scallops and prawns with salt and pepper.
- Arrange on plates.
- Put caramelized papaya at the center.
- Garnish with cilantro.

Soba Noodle and Seaweed Salad with Soy Lime Vinaigrette

Vinaigrette:
½ l soy sauce
250 ml water
35 g ginger, smashed
½ tbsp black pepper, ground
40 ml honey
3 pc star anise
3 stalks lemongrass
250 ml each lime juice and mustard oil
150 ml each grape seed oil and sesame oil
½ tbsp wasabi

- Bring soy sauce, water, ginger, pepper, honey, anise and lemon grass to a simmer and let mixture cool. Whisk in lime juice, oil and incorporate wasabi.

Salad:
1 k *soba* noodles
400 g seaweed, *ao tosaka* (Japanese stores)
1 pc each carrot, lotus root, *daikon*, leek
1 tbsp black and white sesame seeds, toasted

- Cook *soba* noodles in boiling salted water. Strain and put under cold running water to cool.
- Toss *soba* noodles with seaweeds, carrots, leeks, lotus, *daikon* and enough of the dressing to coat.
- Put in bowls. Carefully sprinkle leeks and add toasted sesame seeds.

Pan Seared Foie Gras

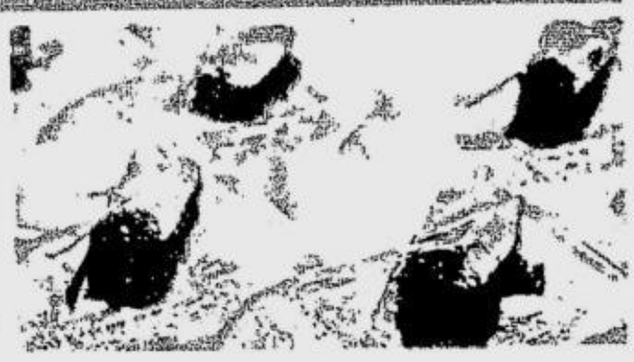
1 pc duck liver, Rougie
¼ c cognac
Salt

- Slice duck liver into ½-inch pieces.
- Marinate in salt and cognac overnight.
- In a hot pan, sear duck liver on both sides until brown.
- Fill plastic-lined terrine mold with warm duck liver. Press down top with lid.
- Place terrine in 350° F oven for 8-10 minutes.
- Let it cool for one to two hours, then refrigerate.
- Remove from terrine mold and slice accordingly.
- Serve with glazed apples.

Glazed apples:
6 pc Granny Smith green apple
½ l honey
1 tbsp freshly picked thyme

- Peel each apple and cut into six.
- Remove cores.
- In a pan, lightly caramelize honey.
- Add apples, thyme and season with black pepper.
- Cook until soft.
- Cool.

Seared Wagyu Beef with Grilled Leeks, Ponzu Jelly and Daikon Radish



250 g Snake River Farms US Wagyu beef rib-eye (Alternative Foods, tel. 6317228-30)
Salt and pepper
1 pc leek, white part only
Salt and pepper
Olive oil
Daikon radish, grated

- Slice Wagyu beef into 1"x1"x6" strips.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- In a hot sauté pan, brown beef on all sides, set aside. When cool enough to handle, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate.
- Season leeks with salt and pepper and olive oil. Make grill marks on grill pan. Set aside.

Ponzu Jelly:
½ c each lemon juice and rice wine vinegar
1 c soy sauce
¼ c mirin
2 tbsp water
½ tbsp gelatin
Togarashi Japanese Spice Blend

- Mix lemon juice, rice wine vinegar, soy sauce and mirin together.
- Dissolve gelatin in 2 tbsp water.
- Mix sauce and bring to a boil in a nonreactive pot.
- Place in a shallow nonreactive container and let set in the fridge.
- Cut into desired shape.
- To plate, place grated radish and grilled leek on the bottom of serving dish.
- Top with sliced beef, ponzu jelly and a dash of Togarashi.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Father's Day essay contest

HEY KIDS! IF YOU WANT TO GIVE DAD A surprise that will warm his heart and tummy, California Pizza Kitchen has got you covered!

In 300-500 words, write about what dad means to you, what he does to make you feel special, and what makes him the No. 1 dad in the whole world; and you can treat him to a free dinner at CPK.

The CPK Father's Day Essay Contest is open to kids 6-12 years old. Entry forms are available at any CPK branch or through www.globalresto.com. CPKids members will get forms through their e-mail.

Deadline is June 13. Entries may be submitted at any CPK branch; or e-mail to marketing@globalresto.com. One winner per CPK branch will get a free dinner for four.

CPK branches are at Glorietta 3, Makati; Corte de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center; 2/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall; and Promenade, Greenhills.

THE EARLY STAGES OF PARENTING:

It's all about Stimulation

When it comes to parenting, providing the very best for your child is of the foremost concern. But these days, it doesn't simply mean pulling out all the stops in choosing the right schools. Now, proper parenting goes hand-in-hand with providing your child the right stimuli for proper brain development.

Research shows that using music, play or nutrition can help enhance the developing mind during your child's earliest stages. But by combining the three, you can make sure you are giving your child a complete system that will strengthen the foundation for his brain development. And there's no better time to start than at the beginning.

THE PRENATAL MIND
Communication with your baby is possible the moment you learn of your pregnancy. In fact, studies show that listening to classical music can help stimulate a child's brain development as early as the prenatal stage. Complex classical music, particularly when listened to during your third trimester of pregnancy, has been found to help develop areas in the baby's brain necessary for math and spatial reasoning.

Prenatal play is another form of stimulation that also helps foster a stronger bond between you and your child. Talking to him, stroking him through the belly and exposing him to light and vibrations are not only pleasurable for him, they also open him up to stimuli early on that will develop more brain connections and pathways to the world outside the womb.

In this stage, it is also important for moms to have proper nutrition, which includes a diet rich in brain-building nutrients DHA and Choline.

THE BRAIN IN ITS INFANCY
Several areas of the brain are used to process music. Some of these areas are also responsible for processing learning, memory and language. Before your child reaches his twelfth month, he responds to sounds and melodies better and does not fully comprehend speech yet. As he ages, however, he will begin to understand music the same way he will understand speech—by listening to others around him, and opening his own mouth to practice making sounds.

When your child's vision begins to develop, he should be exposed to contrasting colors such as red, black and white, which help stimulate his visual development. These colors can be introduced to him through age-appropriate toys that are soft and safe to play with.

Children at this age should also be given proper nutrition. At birth, a child's brain is 25% its approximate adulthood weight, so he needs to be given a diet rich in brain-building nutrients such as DHA and ARA at clinically proven levels, and Choline at Institute of Medicine (IOM) levels, which can be found in breastmilk.

TODDLING TOWARDS PRESCHOOL
When your child is old enough to recognize words and their meanings, it would be a good time to listen to nursery rhymes with him. Singing along reinforces his language development. At the same time, the rhythmic pattern may help your child learn a number of other skills, such as sequencing or cause-and-effect relationships. Long-term benefits in this case include higher scores on tests such as math, increased efficiency in the communication between the two brain hemispheres, better reading scores and enhanced listening skills.

When your child reaches an age where he can easily move around on his own, you'll see that he plays more. And the good news is that play is actually his way of learning. By engaging in games like Do You See What I See?, which reinforce his language development, vocabulary-building and problem-solving skills, or creative crafts such as origami-making, his mind is further developed and he is able to think for himself and express himself in his own way.

And naturally, it is key to continuously provide your child with the essential nutrients, DHA, ARA and Choline, to help support his brain development.

Parenting might just be the most difficult job on earth, but if you properly stimulate your child through music, play and nutrition, you will have the right system at hand to help ensure that you are helping your child's brain development. After all, observing your own child develop in leaps and bounds during these early years will be worth the experience.

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ADVT

3-day diet works like a charm

From page C1

doorstep. The service comes with free consultation. They answer all your questions and advise you on how to make the diet work for you. Call 4390603 or 0917-8815248.

While you're at it, get those metal hula-hoops, or those hi-tech plastic ones with balls. They work so well! What we once thought were extended hips, turned out to be a waist line. Thanks to the hoop I now kinda see the difference! Happy hoopin'!

Three-day diet

Follow the diet for three days and you will lose 10 pounds. It works based on a chemical reaction so you must eat everything on the diet without substituting. It is scientifically proven.

You can have as much water, tea, salt, pepper as you like but no other seasonings. After going on the three-day diet, you can eat normally for four days then go back to it. But do not overeat on those four days. (Developed by the American Heart Association)

Day 1

Breakfast: ½ of a grapefruit

Lunch: ½ c tuna, 1 slice toast, coffee or tea

Dinner: 2 slices, any type of meat (90 gr), 1 c each string beans and beets, 1 small apple, 1 c vanilla ice cream

Day 2

Breakfast: 1 egg, 1 slice toast, ½ banana

Lunch: ½ c cottage cheese, 5 saltine crackers

Dinner: 2 hotdogs, 1 c broccoli, ½ c carrots, ½ banana, ½ c vanilla ice cream

Day 3

Breakfast: 5 saltine crackers, 1 slice cheddar cheese, 1 small apple

Lunch: 1 hard-boiled egg, 1 slice toast

Dinner: 1 c each tuna, beets and cauliflower, ½ cantaloupe, ½ c vanilla ice cream

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

THE CONSUMER

A bright idea

By Linda B. Bolido

THE PRICE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs may seem a lot.

But, as some countries appear to be finding out, not only do household electric bills drop significantly, but more efficient lighting fixtures may also mean they would not need as many energy generating plants as they do now.

In a recent statement, the eminent environment protection advocate Lester R. Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, said a worldwide shift from incandescents to compact fluorescents could close as many as 270 coal-fired power plants.

That means a significant reduction in the demand for coal, a non-renewable fuel, and in carbon emissions, a major contributor to global warming or the rise in earth's average temperatures.

Brown said Australia had already announced "it would phase out the sale of inefficient incandescent light bulbs by 2010, replacing them with highly efficient compact fluorescent bulbs that use one fourth as much electricity."

He said, "If the rest of the world joins Australia in this simple step to sharply cut carbon emissions, the worldwide drop in electricity use would permit the closing of more than 270 coal-fired (500 megawatt) power plants. For the United States, this bulb switch would facilitate shutting down 80 coal-fired plants."

Some two months after Australia's announcement, Brown said the Canadian government announced it would phase out sales of incandescents by 2012.

Climate change concern

The bulb replacement movement, according to the respected environmentalist, was prompted by mounting concerns about climate change.

A United States coalition of environmental groups, along with Philips Lighting, has already launched an initiative to shift to more-efficient bulbs in all of the country's some four billion sockets by 2016.

Philips, the world's largest lighting manufacturer, has also announced plans to discontinue marketing incandescents in Europe and the United States by 2016.

In California, an assemblyman is proposing the state's phaseout of the sale of incandescent light bulbs by 2012 while the New Jersey legislature is planning to require state government buildings to replace all incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents by 2010.

The 27-member strong European Union, which plans to cut carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020, has incorporated the replacement of incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents among its strategies.

In the United Kingdom, a nongovernmental group called Ban the Bulb has been vigorously pushing for a ban on incandescents since early 2006. Moscow is also urging residents to switch to compact fluorescents while New Zealand plans to follow the example of neighboring Australia.

The European Lamp Companies Federation (the bulb manufacturers' trade association) is supporting a rise in EU lighting efficiency standards that would lead to a phase-out of incandescent bulbs.

Brown also reported, "At the commercial level, Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, announced a marketing campaign in November 2006 to boost its sales of compact fluorescents to 100 million by the end of 2007, more than doubling its annual sales. In the UK, Currys, Britain's largest electrical retail chain, has announced that it will discontinue selling incandescent light bulbs."

Street lighting, too

Of course, environmentalists are hoping street lighting will also be replaced with more energy efficient compact fluorescents.

Compact fluorescent bulbs had been around for a generation but Brown said consumers showed little interest in them because they could cost five times as much as incandescents.

He said only more knowledgeable consumers knew that a fluorescent bulb used only one fourth as much electricity, lasted 10 times as long, and easily saved US$50 (almost P2,500) during its lifetime.

"Shifting to the highly efficient bulbs sharply reduces monthly electricity bills and cuts carbon emissions, since each standard (13 watt) compact fluorescent over its lifetime reduces coal use by more than 210 pounds. Such a shift also substantially reduces air pollution, making it obviously attractive for fast-growing economies plagued with bad air like China and India," Brown said.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

PALOMA, A MODERN SPANISH BISTRO (6/F of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, tel. 9104096), offers Ostrich Salpicao, Cheese Triangles and Braised Quails, Callos, Lengua Sevillana, among others. Paloma is known for its *paellas*. Favorites include Paella Flamenco and Paella Paloma. In photo is Paloma Solomillo.

HEAVENLY T-BONE
Treat dad to a hearty steak meal from Heaven 'N Eggs. The T-bone steak is marinated in olive oil and pepper. The generous cut has a thin layer of fat that extracts the flavor of the beef. It is served with mashed potato, deep-fried poach egg and buttered vegetables. It can be prepared well-done, medium or rare. Heaven 'N Eggs is at Eastwood CityWalk, Libis, Quezon City, tel. 9121172 or 0917-8EWCITY.

THE BELLEVUE HOTEL'S CAKE OF THE month is a rich chocolate cake made with soft-centered crème brulee and raspberry mousse glazed with melted Hershey's chocolate. The hotel also offers Independence Day Buffet on June 12, all-native lunch and dinner consisting of Lechon, Chicken Adobo, Laing, Bulalo, Ginataang Tanguigue, Sinuam na Halaan, Chicken Relleno and Brazo de Mercedes (tel. 7718181).

Kalayaan Day fiesta

DINING OUT

SOFITEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA CELEBRATES Independence Day June 11. Its Spiral restaurant presents "Kalayaan Day Fiesta" which features seven different international stations—Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Southeast Asian and Mediterranean. The newly opened Le Bar, the bistro-bar-library, offers French pastries. Also check out Gallette, the newest patisserie at the lobby (tel. 5515555 local 1086 or 6988, Le Bar; and 1736, Gallette).

SUPER BOWL of China treats Dad to a free serving of BBQ Pork Asado June 10-30. Dads who dine with a group at any branch will get the dish for a minimum one-time dine-in purchase of only P600. The first 200 Dads who celebrate at any Super Bowl branch on Father's Day, June 17, will receive a discount voucher that gives them a P200 discount for a minimum purchase of P1,000 at Blade Auto Center.

THE NEWEST CLUBBING trend in the United States is coming to Holiday Inn Galleria Manila's all-new Bed Bar @ Bar One. Until June 15th, Bed Bar @ Bar One takes the concept of dinner in bed to a whole new level, as guests are invited to wine, dine, recline and immerse themselves in cool chill beats from a guest DJ. A minimum consumable fee of P300 per person will be charged during the promo period. Each bed can accommodate up to eight persons comfortably. Bar One is on the 4th level of Holiday Inn Galleria Manila , tel. 6337111.

ZZUBU Bar in Cebu offers tuna dishes like Sizzling Tuna Sisig, Deep-fried Tuna, Kinilaw, Sweet and Sour Tuna, Deep-fried Buntot, Tuna Sticks. Other dishes include pork, chicken, beef, spicy seafood and more.

SANDS RESTAURANT of Discovery Shores offers diners a five-star experience while enjoying a panoramic view of the world-famous white beach of Boracay. Inspired by the location, corporate chef David Pardo de Ayala has come up with what he calls Contemporary Island Cuisine. It features what Ayala says are the four building blocks of his cooking: fresh seafood, tropical fruits, young coconut and prime beef. Sands is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, daily (tel. 6838392, 6838222 local 3438; or 6336-2884500 and 632-7208888).

COOKING CLASSES

Tapa for breakfast

The Reggie Aspiras School Of Culinary Arts offers the following classes:

June 8—Decadent Pinoy Breakfast (all new)—Tapa Three Ways: Wagyu Tapa a la Pobre, Angus Teriyaki Tapa, Sweet and Spicy Angus Tapa, all served with fried rice, egg and relish variations; Bistek Tagalog—soy and citrus marinated Angus tenderloin in brown onion gravy served with fried vegetables and pepper relish; Fried Garlic Marinated Kurobuta Pork Belly with Truffle Champorado.

June 9—Mediterranean & Middle Eastern Buffet great for entertaining—(special class, all new)—Mediterranean Salad, Pita Bread with Dips of Humus, Eggplant and Roasted Bell Pepper served with Beef Shawarma with all its condiments and sauces; Chicken and Beef Kebabs with sauces and Basmati Rice Salad; Delicious Couscous with Merguez (lamb sausage) Stew, Best-ever Baklava and Almond Cake

June 11—Mozarella (all new)—authentic Mini Pizzas four kinds: with prosciutto; garlic and olive oil pancetta and mushrooms; seafood (home-made crust and rich tomato sauce); authentic Lasagne al Forno (so far one of my best recipes), Classic Canneloni al Forno, Moussaka and Eggplant Parmigiana

June 12—Roast Beef 101—Learn all the secrets to perfecting your Roast Beef: Hotel-style Angus Rib-Eye Roast with rub variations, served with six sauces; best-ever French Onion Soup; Caesar Salad Bar, four dressing variations with seafood

June 13—My Best Pot Roast Recipes—Four delicious recipes, yet none alike: Classic Pot Roast with Pilaf, Garlic-loaded with Garlic Boursin Creamed Potatoes, Italian Style with Fresh Pasta with Parmesan and Butter, Oriental with Noodles. New class schedules until July are now available. Call 9289296 or 9273008.

Modern Italian cooking

Maya Kitchen offers the Modern Italian Pasta course on June 16, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Find out the secrets of modern Italian cooking and learn how to cook Chicken Ragout with handmade Stracchi Pasta, Confit Pork Belly, Saffron Pasta with Angel Hair Pasta, Vegetarian Pasta, Pancetta and Mush room.

A workshop covers preparing handmade fresh pasta.

Basic Culinary on June 13-15, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., provides essential lessons in proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs and spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing and boning poultry, filleting fish and meat fabrication. Actual preparation of dishes from appetizer to dessert, including garnishing for plate presentation, is also included.

Enrollees get a free "Mix and Match" cookbook.

Bartending on June 16, 2-6 p.m., covers basic tools, classifications of wine and spirits, types of bar glasses. Also covered are Usage Mixing, Serving of Popular Cocktail Drinks including Garnishing with wine tasting and snacks.

Fundamentals of Bakery Production on June 19-22, 2-6 p.m., covers standard baking techniques applicable to baking application on the use of ready mixes, yeast, bread, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes. Theory practice for commercial-scale productions is included. Baking cookbook will be given away.

Maya Kitchen is at the 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City (tel. 8921185 or 8925011 local 108; e-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph).

For weekend cooks

Dorothy's Cooking School will conduct cooking classes for the weekend cook on June 7 featuring unusual dishes like whole fish baked in salt, roast duck with peaches and other easy to prepare recipes. Chocolate as an ingredient for cooking and baking will be showcased on June 9. For other cooking and baking schedules, call 721-7735 and 416-7968.

The school is owned by cookbook author Dorothy Ferreria and is located in New Manila, Quezon City.

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Drink, sing and be merry

TUBA and song go together.

DURING A VISIT TO SWEDEN, EVENINGS always found our party trying the lethal Swedish *aquavit* and swinging to drinking songs.

After the Swedes belted out their love for the drink, they turned to us and expected us to sing the Filipino version. Filipinos, after all, are known for their singing.

The Filipino men looked at each other, stumped because no one knew any drinking song. Growing up in the city, taking a drink involved just imbibing for those gents. The singing was left to the band, the chanteuse or those trying hard at karaoke warbling.

I knew a song taught by German nuns. It seemed like a drinking song because the last words were "*skål, skål skål*," or "toast" in all the Scandinavian languages.

Why the nuns taught us a song about a sailor who wooed girls at every port and left them, I don't know. But that wasn't a Filipino song so I kept quiet.

But go to the provinces and join a drinking session and chances are you'll be treated to drinking songs, sometimes accompanied by a lone guitar.

Drinking choir

By accident, I recorded a few seconds of a drinking song in Leyte. I had set my camera wrongly and captured the spirited voices with snatches of second voices and some kibitzing.

At a recent taping of a "Chef TV" episode, the Bayanihan National Dance Troupe sang "Tuba," a Waray song about their favorite spirit, coconut wine. It also performed *sayaw sa bangko*, the dancers negotiating a narrow bench while balancing glasses of tuba on their heads and hands just to make everything a bit more interesting.

Three of the girls did "Sayaw sa Basi," balancing glasses on their heads and hands as they rolled on the floor. *Basi* is the Ilocano drink made from sugar cane.

To get the lyrics of "Tuba," I turned to a valuable reference, "The Folk Songs" compiled and edited by Damiana L. Eugenio (De La Salle University Press, 1996).

Condansoy, inom tuba, Laloy,
Dili co moinom, tuba pait aslom
Ang tuba sa baybay
Patente mo angay,
Talacsan nga diutay
Pono ang malaway

The song asks a young boy, Condansoy, to drink Laloy's tuba but he won't because he says the tuba is bitter and sour. The boy also believes that Laloy's tuba sold at the beach should be patented because just a little swig will make you crazy drunk.

The book attributes the song to E. Reysio-Cruz but also says identical versions are found in Cebu, Bohol and Tacloban.

Websites dedicated to those provinces do contain that song though sometimes the name used is Dandansoy, which is also the title of a Hiligaynon farewell song.

"Plastado sa Bangko" is a Bikol song that already says in its title what can happen after you get drunk. You can be "down and out on the bench."

Warays sing of "An Parainom," a drunkard who lies on the street until morning (*nahigda sa dalan nga na aagahon*).

"Uhaw Tagay" is a Cebuano song that speaks of thirst and asks for the glass to be filled (*tagay*).

Pulutan

There is also a line that says if there is no *sumsuman* (*pulutan*), specialties eaten during drinking sessions, then a *hinuktan* or a fighting cock should be killed.

They can't even wait for the cock to lose, *talunan* to Tagalogs and *bihag* to Warays. In the Visayas, a *bihag* is usually boiled because the cock has tough meat and ligaments.

But in Bulacan, according to Conrad Calalang, the *talunan* is braised and the dish is called *pakam*.

But not all drinking songs are about getting drunk and measuring drinks.

"Mananggete" is a Hiligaynon song about a tuba gatherer and describes how the coconut is tapped to produce the wine by sitting on the branch and tapping it (*pamungko sa paklang kag magpatik-patik*).

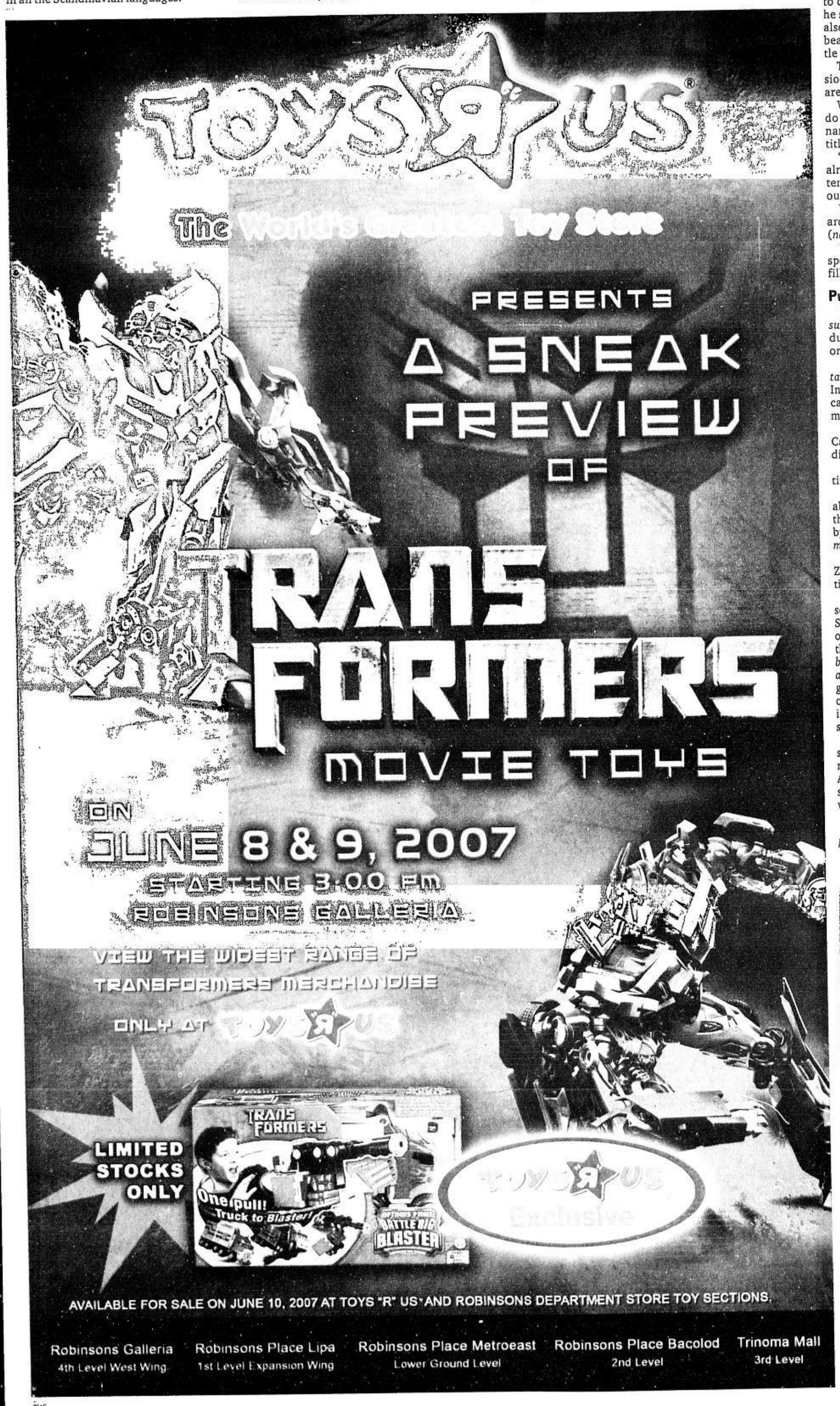
"Bella Fondera," on the other hand, is a Zamboanga Chavacano song about a beautiful bar owner.

Quite quaint and unforgettable was a song rendered by two elderly women in Sariaya, Quezon. They each offered a glass of *lambanog* to welcome guests to one of the old, distinguished houses (*malaking bahay*) in the place. They sang a *pandango awit* taught them when they were young girls by the head of their town council. One of the guests drank his share then declared it as *lambanog* from *nipa* or *sasa*. A connoisseur.

I tried to find the song in the book but since I didn't know the title and couldn't remember the lyrics, the exercise was futile. At least I hope those women passed on that song to the younger generation or else we would have lost a part of our culture.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

TAGAY. A guest accepts the welcome *lambanog* from the host.



Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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ANNE CURTIS

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Of love and TV ratings

By Jacky A. Oiga
Contributor

TAKE FIVE

IF ANNE CURTIS were given a chance to reconcile with a former flame, she said she would choose her first love, Oyo Boy Sotto.

"My feelings for Oyo have never waned. I'm not closing any doors. Let's see what happens," Anne told a group of writers during the press conference for "May Minamahal," her new show on the Kapamilya network, which teams her up with ... who else but Oyo?

Anne is Oyo's love interest in "Sineserye Presents" third offering, the TV version of Star Cinema's 1993 romantic movie featuring Aga Muhlach and Aiko Melendez.

Now that the two are working together, speculations abound that the former sweethearts—both unattached at the moment—would end up rekindling the old flame, if not boosting the show's ratings.

What's the real score between you and Sam Milby?

I am "single." Sam and I are good friends.

What was the greatest thing you've ever done for a loved one?

I really think you will do anything if you love a person, even if it makes you look stupid.

How old were you when you first dated Oyo?

I was 15, he was 17.

Aga and Aiko's chemistry in "May Minamahal" was perfect. Does this pose a challenge to you?

I know that expectations are very high because "May Minamahal" the movie was a big hit in the '90s. But Oyo and I are doing our best. It also helps that we had a past relationship because the chemistry is still there.

Is it true that you had to give up being part of Book II of "Maging Sino Ka Man" to do "May Minamahal?"

If there'd be a Book II, I'd be delighted to be a part of it.

Directed by Gilbert Perez and Ruel Naval, "May Minamahal" airs weekdays, 6 p.m. on ABS-CN.

French films

THE 12TH FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL opens today at the Shangri-La Plaza in Manila with "OSS 117," a classic French parody of James Bond.

Organized by the French Embassy and the Alliance Française de Manille, the film fest runs until June 17 in Manila and from June 22 to 24 at the Ayala Center in Cebu.

To be screened are choice contemporary films—drama, action thriller, comedy and animation.

On June 12, the festival will pay tribute to Philippine cinema with the screening of Jeck Cogama's "Putot," which was included in the official selection of the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, as well as a retrospective of the films of Brillante Mendoza, the Filipino representative to the Directors' Fortnight of the Cannes Film Festival.

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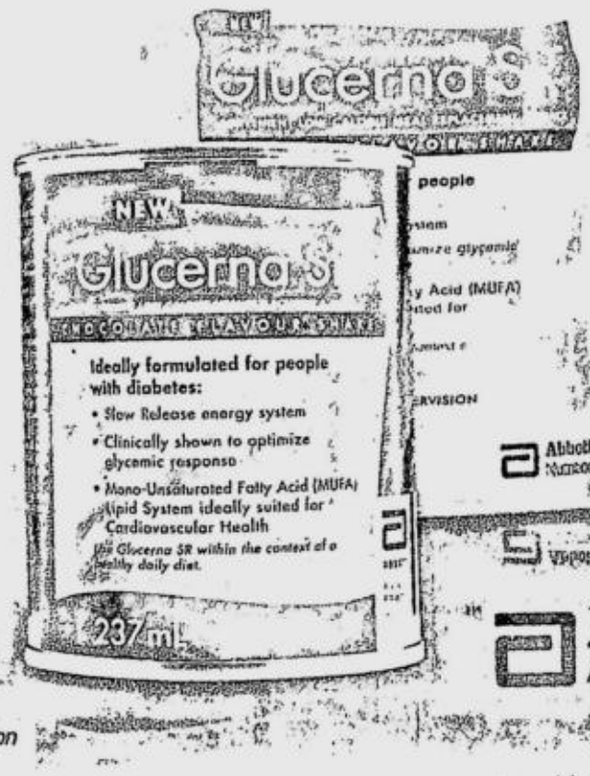

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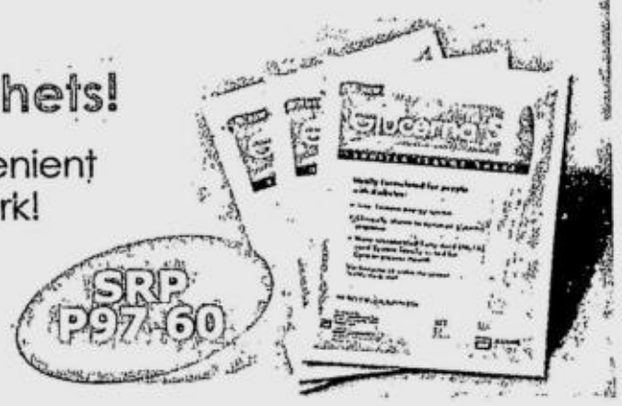

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A problematic show

STAR search shows may have overlooked Mommy Elvie Villasanta, 79, mother of TV host Ariel of the Ariel and Maverick duo, but her son did not. With the help of ABC-5 and Lion's Faith Production, Ariel will coach and manage his mom till she fulfills her wish of becoming a star before she reaches 80—via a TV show. She stars in "Mommy Elvie's Problematic Show," the network's latest comedy series to be aired starting June 12, at 8 p.m. In the segment "Problema Na Naman," Ariel and the wacky Nicole Hiyala of Love Radio, plus Mommy Elvie, will give realistic, if comic, solutions to real-life problems and concerns of ordinary people.

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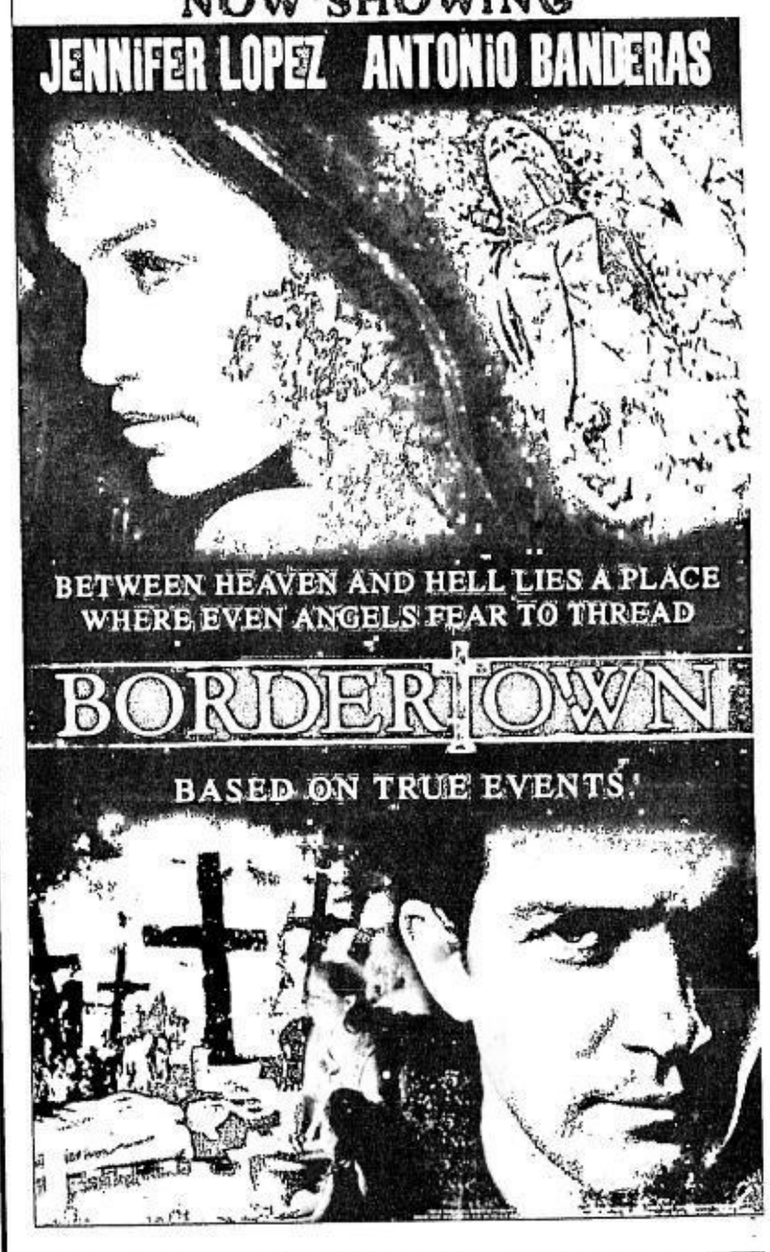

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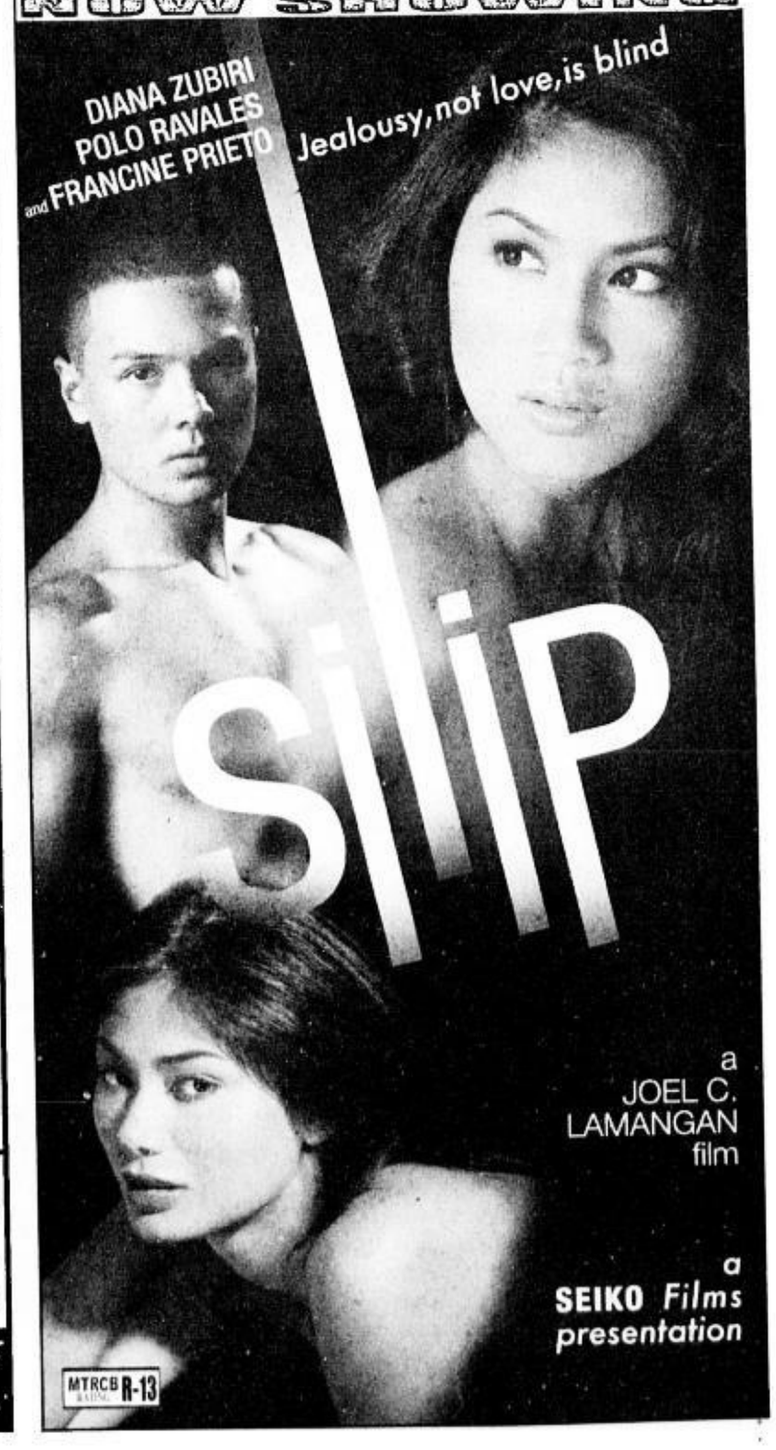

Mock me, mock me, Annabelle!

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Apparently, Ruffa's mother doesn't care to answer anything in the affirmative or negative, only in expletives

I THOUGHT I ALREADY MADE MYSELF clear on the entire Ruffa Gutierrez-Annabelle Rama-Yilmaz Bektas brouhaha (or should I say "bruhilda-haha"?) in last week's column. This scandal is coming out of people's ears, nationwide. The mother-daughter tandem seems bent to make the story drag on and on.

And on.

Or else, why the full media coverage of Gutierrez's supposed soul-searching in Disneyland and Las Vegas?

I have much better things to write about. But Rama is on a rampage against me; she just refuses to be ignored. So pardon me for using precious column space to clarify matters. I think it's best to put everything down in black and white now, in a form that I can't disown later, rather than grant TV interviews (I have begged off from requests made by "24 Oras" on GMA 7 and "TV Patrol" on ABS-CBN) that can be spliced for the sheer purpose of sensationalizing and/or pitting personalities against one another.

Who's this about again?

Why is the issue suddenly being diverted from the real protagonists? I'm not trying to save face here. I take full responsibility for everything that comes out in this column. But can we *please* stick to valid questions? On GMA 7's "Showbiz Central" last Sunday, when Rama unleashed more than two mouthfuls, couldn't interviewer Pia Guanio ask point-blank if Gutierrez had really married a certain Richard Daloia in Nevada in 1999?

That question remains unanswered. I bet that this paper's readers—they were the ones who asked, by the way, if Rama missed that part—would be content with a simple yes or no, true or false. Obviously, Rama doesn't care to answer anything in the affirmative or negative, only in expletives.

In the process, and just to get the job of muddling the issue done, she doesn't mind contradicting herself. She says I have no money, then proceeds to accuse me of hiring, nightly, men tagged as ... I-can't-say-the darn-word-here. I'm *bobo*, she insists. Why is she so affected by what this nitwit writes? She claims I became a columnist in this paper just because of my connections. What's that got to do with anything?

I never, ever attacked their persons, let me get that straight. All I tackled in previous columns were inquiries from readers regarding links to a website where they had found, posted, a document that says Gutierrez, using her real name Sharmaine, had married Daloia five years before she wed Yilmaz.

For the record, INQUIRER Entertainment sought their camp for clarification but all we got was a brush-off. Rama demanded that I desist from delving into the issue (the word she used was "sawsaw"). If they so abhor media scrutiny, why didn't they go about this whole thing quietly?

Frankly, I didn't bother to watch Rama's most recent interviews; I don't fancy listening to a broken record. But well-meaning friends told me how she went Dolly-bashing on "Showbiz Central." It's very disappointing that the Kapuso network allowed such a heartless tirade! Does being the mother of GMA 7's hottest property (Richard Gutierrez) give her the license to waste valuable airtime lambasting anyone she pleases at anytime? The things she said on prime time TV! Maybe she should replace her other son, Raymond, on the talk program. Maybe she has cowed some network execs well enough and often enough in the past, so that now she believes she can get away with anything.

There are rules

The "Showbiz Central" bit was probably great reality TV, but was it journalism?

To its credit, "TV Patrol," interviewing Rama upon arrival at the airport last week, stopped when it should, when the message—Rama was enraged—had been delivered. They had deemed, and rightly so, that expansion was unnecessary. "Showbiz Central" had to squeeze it to the last unsavory drop.

After the ballistic Rama was done berating me, Pia Guanio didn't even ask exactly where the venom was coming from. Was Rama mad at me, or had she just gone mad, period? Did the interview clear up anything? Isn't the television interviewer bound by rules set down by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board to apologize to the viewers immediately after an offensive sound byte? Maybe "offensive" should be spelled out for some supposed pros? In fact, aren't interviewers on any program—especially those who believe they have the chops for it and say so themselves—supposed to be equipped with basic training that prepares them, in the very least, to be neither rattled nor intimidated by the interviewee?

The Yilmaz turnabout

The Ruffa-Ylmaz split-up is all over print, radio and TV. I was asked to find out what I could, to balance out the one-sided hysterics so deftly dramatized on-cam. Not that I wanted to. But duty called. I repeat: I never wrote a personal attack on either Gutierrez or Rama. That's certainly not my style. I don't fight fire with fire.

Which, come to think of it, Yilmaz did! He called his wife a "traitor," "Brutus," "that person." She could win an Oscar again and again, he said in a televised interview. He was prepared to "close my heart to these feelings" of missing his children, he said. "I'd rather be called a drug lord," he said, than have his name mentioned in the same sentence as "Lady Annabelle" and "Lady Ruffa."

Of course, he made a 360-degree turnabout less than 48 hours later—after Rama threatened that Gutierrez would reveal the real reason for the split-up if he didn't stop talking. (What have we been getting all along?) That's another story, one that we'd rather ignore from hereon in.

I can't help but wonder: If my mom were still alive, would Rama have the audacity to character-assassinate me, as if she owned me? And even if she did that, would it be aired on GMA 7—former home of my mom's top-rating talk programs?

Ms Rama, I may not have the kind of money that you have, but my mom left me treasures that money cannot buy. In the world she raised me in, the best things aren't things.

Rama says in her TV ad, "Monkey, monkey, Annabelle." I say, "Mock me, mock me, Annabelle!" Enrich my vocabulary. Your words are a novelty to me. *Annabelleisms*! Enduring your wrath is a small price to pay, to prove that you can't buy everybody. As a true child of show business, I'd like to believe there's still hope for the industry, but only if we don't allow a few like you to monopolize it.

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

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	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS	4 BORDERTOWN	5 OCEAN'S 13	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 28 WEEKS LATER	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 MEET THE ROBINSONS		
	3 BORDERTOWN	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	5 SILIP	

At the Activity Center
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbell - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

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June 9 & 10, 2007

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Fitness at the Town:
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June 1 to 13, 2007

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Maria Flordeluna Mall Tour
June 15, 2007

MARKET! MARKET!
Bazaar! Bazaar! Men's Fair
June 4 to 15, 2007

GREENBELT
Mazda Car Exhibit
June 7 to 9, 2007 at GB 1 Lobby

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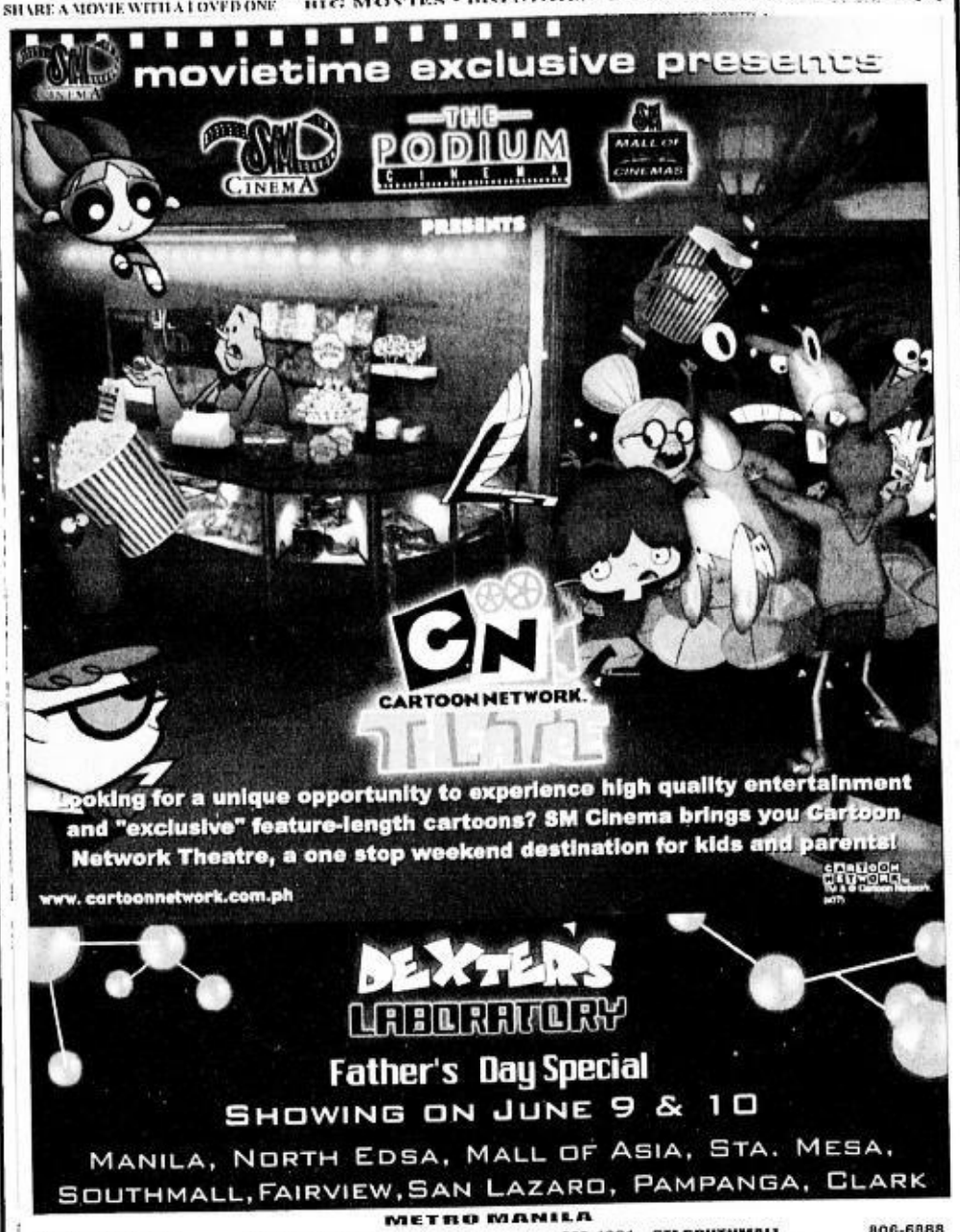


METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0242
IMAX
SPIDER-MAN 3 12:30PM 8:30PM Admission Prices: P 350
T-REX 3:30PM 7:00PM Admission Prices: P 200
ANT BULLY 5:00PM Admission Prices: P 250
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 BORDERTOWN
4 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
5 SHREK 3
6 SILIP
PREMIERE CINEMA
PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
CENTERSTAGE
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
PODIUM
CINEMA 1
OCEAN'S 13
CINEMA 2
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 ZODIAC
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 BORDERTOWN
7 OCEAN'S 13
8 SHREK 3
9 SILIP
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
12 BORDERTOWN

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 SHREK 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
8 BORDERTOWN
9 SILIP
10 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
12 ZODIAC

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 BORDERTOWN
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SHREK 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 SILIP
6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
7 OCEAN'S 13
8 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
11 MEET THE ROBINSONS
12 ZODIAC

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 OCEAN'S 13
4 SILIP
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 ZODIAC
7 BORDERTOWN
8 SHREK 3
9 MEET THE ROBINSONS
10 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 OCEAN'S 13
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
5 SILIP
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 SILIP
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 BORDERTOWN
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
6 SHREK 3
7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
8 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
9 SPIDER-MAN 3

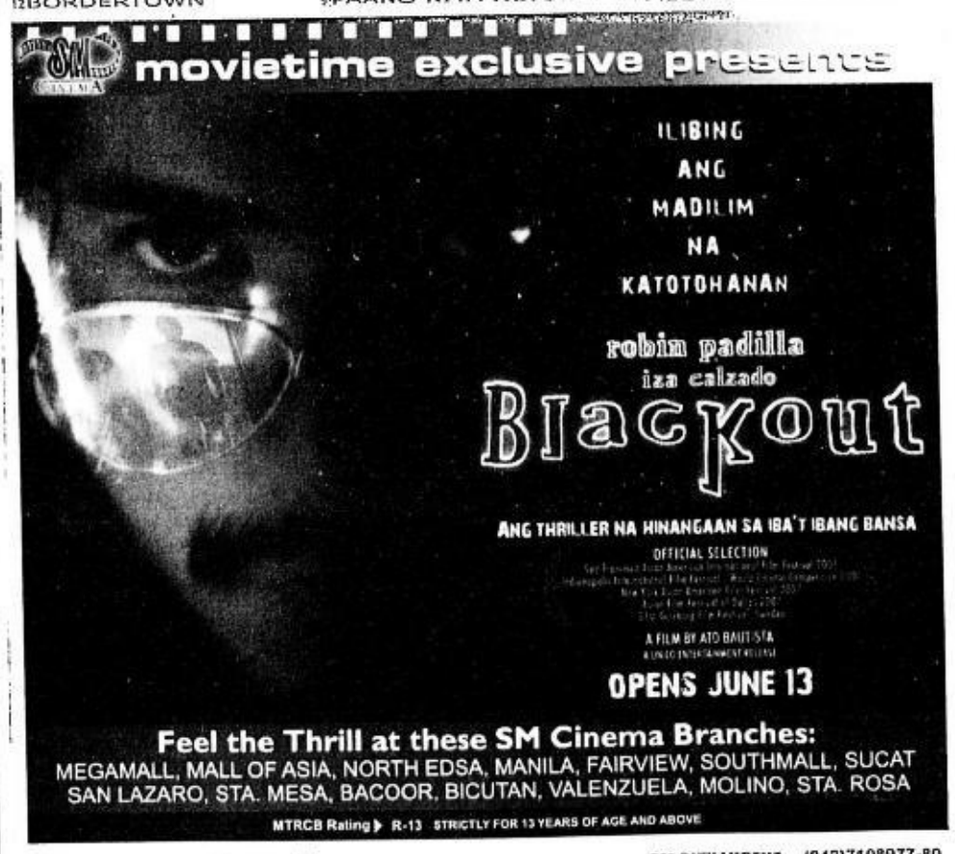
SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SILIP
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-0240
1 BORDERTOWN
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 MEET THE ROBINSONS
6 OCEAN'S 13
7 SHREK 3
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
9 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
10 SILIP
11 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
12 OCEAN'S 13

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4333201-04
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SILIP
4 OCEAN'S 13

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SILIP
2 OCEAN'S 13
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS



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MTRCB Rating ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP
5 OCEAN'S 13
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SHREK 3

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 SILIP

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
2 SILIP
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SILIP
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637081-85
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 SILIP

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 OCEAN'S 13

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5340811
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP
5 SHREK 3
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 FIREHOUSE DOG
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 OCEAN'S 13
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
7 SILIP
8 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 SHREK 3/ OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 28 WEEKS LATER
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
6 SILIP
7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
8 OCEAN'S 13

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP

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MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY G 1:50,3:50,5:50, 7:50,9:50	MEET THE ROBINSONS G 1:10,3:25,5:40, 7:55,10:10	OCEAN'S THIRTEEN PG13 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30
PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 G 12:50,4:00, 7:10,10:20	BORDERTOWN 12:50,3:15,5:40, 8.00,10:30	OCEAN'S THIRTEEN PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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CINEMA 3 BORDERTOWN 10:20 ,12:45, 3:15 5:45 , 8:15 , 10:40
CINEMA 4 MEET THE ROBINSONS 10:45 , 1:00 , 3:15 5:30 , 7:45 , 10:00 GP
CINEMA 5 OCEANS 13 11:00 , 1:55 , 4:50 7:45 10:40 PG-13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

June 15 & 26 , 2007	Rico J. Puno & Mitch Valdez	8.00 PM
June 08 , 22 , 29 , 2007 June 15 , 2007	Drag - Ons Champion of the World (Jed Madela)	10.00 PM 8.30 PM

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Don't subvert

AFTER THE *TELENOVELA* AND THE *KOMIKS* adaptation, now comes local TV's latest innovation, the *sineserye*. As the concocted term suggests, this newest batch of adaptations is taken from popular films.

To date, we have "Hiram na Mukha," "Sinasamba Kita," "Walang Kapalit" and "May Minamahal." It's easy to see why these film-to-TV adaptations have become popular: They're relatively "pre-sold" in terms of interest value, and initially less work for the production's writers.

Ironically, after the adaptation project is approved, the writers have to work much harder to make the original material more "interesting" for today's viewers. A lot of license is taken, as new elements in terms of plot and characters are introduced and developed.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

It gets to the point where the original material has been tweaked so much that it becomes well nigh unrecognizable. So, why bother to start with an old film in the first place? Good question.

But local TV hews to a logic all its own, and as long as the adaptation rates, it's all good. Still, this trend toward exploiting and "dismantling" old material worries us, because it indicates how uncreatively pragmatic and utilitarian some of our TV people have become.

Instead of bothering to think up fresh story line and characters, they've gotten used to simply dusting off old movies, rewriting them, and eventually fobbing them off as their own "re-creations."

Another negative consequence is the fact that the trend toward deconstructed adaptations disrespects the artists involved in making the original film. Their carefully constructed work is taken apart, added to, and put together again without so much as a by-your-leave from many of them.

True, the *sineseryes* "reintroduce" outstanding old movies to a new generation of viewers—but, in gravely compromised and subverted form. So, where is the tribute there?

Adaptations are also on view on TV in other countries, but in much less compromised form.

There is greater respect for the integrity of the original material, and rude deconstruction is minimized.

We hope that local TV people who work on *sineseryes* take stock of what they're doing, and do the right thing by the senior artists whose stories they've chosen to tell anew to a new generation of viewers.

Film franchises forever

These days, it isn't only spiders, wizards, pirates and ogres who are on sequel mode; other film franchises are unveiling the latest chapters of their twice-or thrice-told tales:

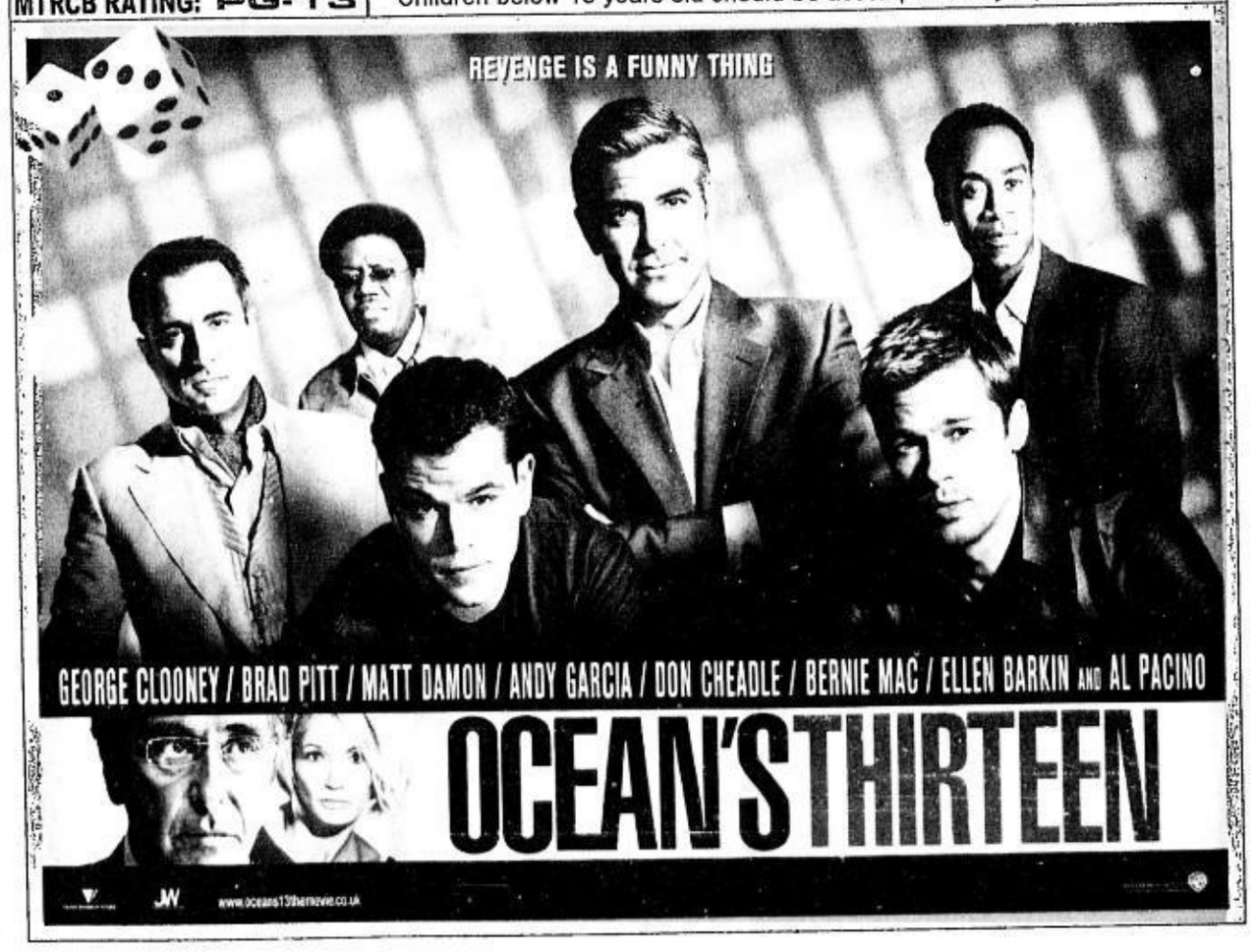
After a hiatus of many years, Bruce Willis is back in top sardonic fighting form in "Die Hard 4.0." This fourth time around, his signature character, New York cop John McClave, takes on his most ruthless opponents yet—brilliant cyber terrorists who have the power and expertise to cripple the United States—spreading chaos across the globe.

Also on tenterhooks are the Fantastic Four superheroes in their new adventure, "Rise of the Silver Surfer." The film starts after the demise of Dr. Doom, when the Four's life is back to normal. Little do they know that a new enemy known as the Silver Surfer is bent on destroying the world, and it's up to the Four to stop him—even as they have to deal with the return of Dr. Doom!

'Meet the Robinsons'

After "Shrek 3," the latest animated feature to hit the silver screen is "Meet the Robinsons." The time-traveling blast of a comedy jets viewers to an inventive, unexpected techno realm of tomorrow—where the wildest dreams come true. Those dreams include those of Lewis, a young inventor in search of a home.

NOW SHOWING!
MTRCB RATING: PG-13 Children below 13 years old should be accompanied by a parent or adult.



GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

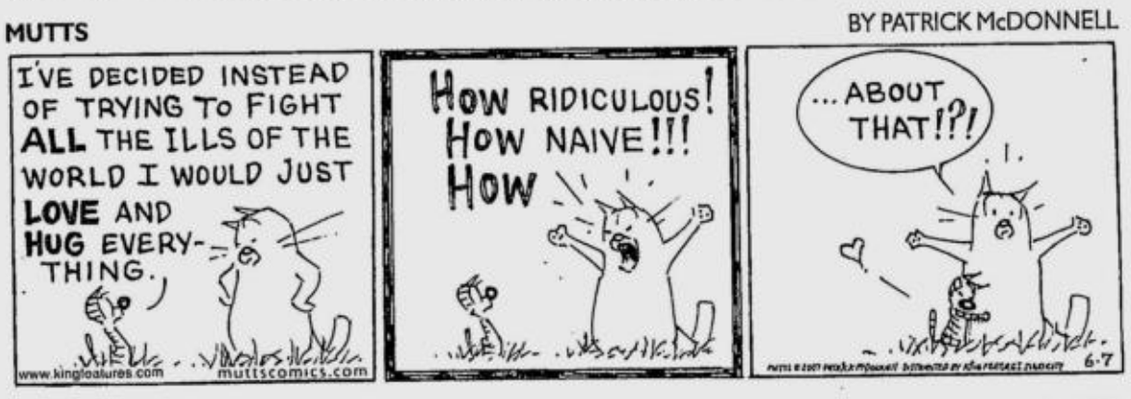
BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE

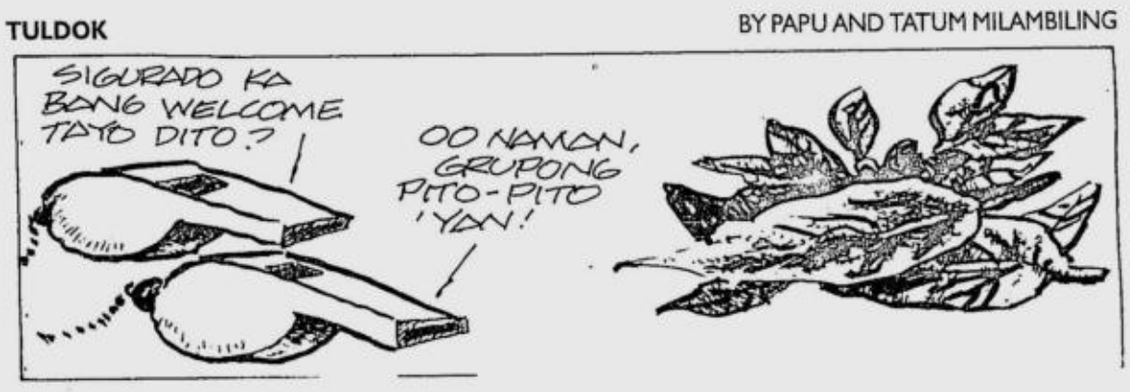
BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



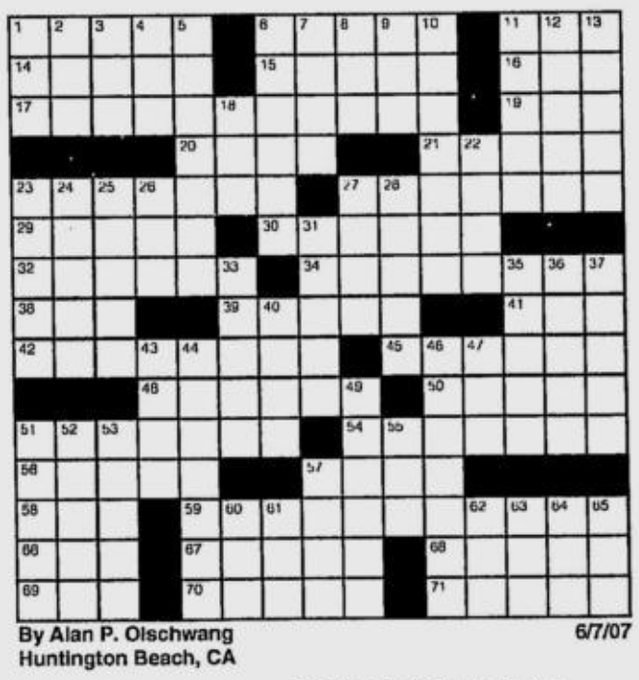
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Eyelashes
6 Gymnast Comaneci
11 Alias initials
14 Dental tool
15 Screen images
16 Weep audibly
17 Start of Evan Esar quip
19 Snoop
20 Extra-wide shoe size
21 Climbing vines
23 Fillets
27 Dutch Guiana, now
29 Related maternally
30 Putts a gimme
32 Visual aids
34 Part 2 of quip
38 Creative skill
39 Scottish feudal lord
41 Gasteyer of "SNL"
42 Part 3 of quip
45 Male ducks
48 Ready
50 Turn inside out
51 Shrill laughs
54 Begrudges
56 Cowboy contest
57 Goof on a pinball machine
58 Bobble the ball
59 End of quip
66 DDE's arena
67 Online commerce
68 Less common
69 Lake maker
70 "Death Be Not Proud" poet
71 Great Caesar's ghost!

DOWN
1 Summer hrs. in Chicago
2 Novelist Levin
3 Abner's size?
4 Sort or kind
5 One to whom property is transferred
6 Most pleasant
7 Painful throb
8 Name for an unknown
9 Balin or Claire
10 Headache remedy
11 Clinton cabinet member
12 Politically divided nation
13 Bottomless pit
18 Notice
22 Chianti, e.g.
23 Hold up
24 Juan's winter month
25 African language family
26 NFL bonuses
27 Revolved
28 You in the Yucatan
31 Diminish
33 Manner of performance
35 Abducted
36 Unmoving
37 Abstains from eating
40 Sibilant sound
43 Rice wine
44 Permitted
46 Revitalize
47 St. crosser
49 Bagatelle
51 Words to live by
52 Major artery
53 Computer acronym
55 Cornering pipe
57 Like a wafer
60 Skater Midori
61 Light brown
62 Tail wiggle
63 Notable time
64 "__ River"
65 AARP members



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
6/7/07

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	A	R		M	A	R	E		E	M	B	E	D
P	A	G	E		A	M	E	N		L	O	I	R	E
I	R	A	N		S	A	S	E		L	U	G	E	R
C	O	V	E	R	C	H	A	R	G	E	S			
E	L	E	G	Y		S	T	O	L		S	M	O	G
			A	E	S				I	D	E	A	T	E
A	V	I	D		T	A	T	A	M	I		S	T	S
G	E	N	E	R	A	L	E	X	P	E	N	S	E	S
A	G	T		O	R	A	T	E	S		A	E	R	O
P	A	R	C	E	L				E	M	I			
E	N	O	L		E	A	S	E		A	L	E	R	T
			E	N	T	R	A	N	C	E	F	E	E	S
M	A	U	V	E		A	M	O	R		I	R	M	A
A	P	N	E	A		B	O	L	A		L	I	A	R
S	T	A	R	T		S	A	A	B		E	E	N	S

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6/7/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very smooth and charming. People love your wit and your energy. You're a shrewd judge of character; you understand the human condition. You can act and express yourself through your physicality. Others are extremely attracted to your easygoing, enthusiastic way of being. Work hard to build or construct something this year. Your rewards will soon follow.
Birthdate of: Johnny Clegg, musician; Liam Neeson, actor; Anna Kournikova, tennis player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might need a little downtime for yourself today. You'll definitely enjoy some moments of solitude. Try to sneak away for a little bit if you can.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Enjoy the company of others today—in particular, female friends. You feel the need for company. Don't spend this day alone. (If you need to make friends, be friendly!)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Discussions with parents, bosses, teachers or VIPs might be frank and revealing today. You don't mind saying exactly what is on your mind.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): If you feel a bit restless, it's because you want a little adventure. You want something new to happen in your life. Why not go someplace you've never been before?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good day to clean up junk and stuff you have around where you work or live. Tackle garbage areas, bathrooms, plumbing places and dark, grungy spaces.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have to go more than halfway when dealing with others today. The Moon is directly opposite your sign. Don't worry; two weeks from now, it's your turn!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You'll feel better about where you live if you reduce the clutter and tidy up a bit. It's important to remember that you're very influenced by your surroundings.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel a bit playful and prankish today. In fact, some of you also feel quite flirtatious. Do whatever you can to enjoy yourself. Have fun!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Focus your attention on home, family and domestic matters today. Some of you will be involved with a parent more than usual. Childhood memories could surface today as well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's a busy day. Short trips, errands, reading, writing and studying, plus talking to neighbors and relatives (especially siblings) are all on the menu today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might feel protective about your possessions today, for whatever reason. In fact, you might feel sentimental about something, especially if you can't find it!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're more emotional than usual today. However, the good news is that you're also a little bit luckier today than other days. (Sometimes that's all it takes—a little bit of extra good luck.)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		2	7		3			
		4	8					
9	5			6	4			
2	4					5		1
		8				4		
7		3					9	2
			9	2			1	7
					8	6		
			5		7	2		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 6/07

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

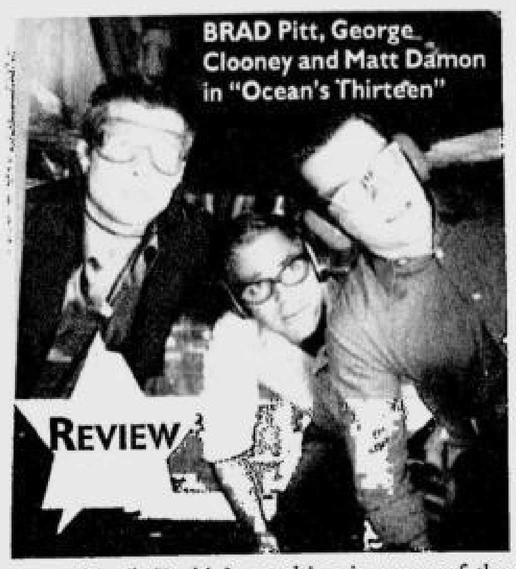
3	5	2	8	6	9	1	4	7
9	7	8	4	1	2	5	6	3
1	6	4	3	7	5	8	2	9
4	3	9	5	8	6	2	7	1
2	1	7	9	3	4	6	5	8
6	8	5	1	2	7	9	3	4
8	4	6	7	5	1	3	9	2
7	2	3	6	9	8	4	1	5
5	9	1	2	4	3	7	8	6

Difficulty Level ★★★

ENTERTAINMENT

'Ocean' still hasn't lost it

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor



BRAD Pitt, George Clooney and Matt Damon in "Ocean's Thirteen"

IT'S NOT THE SAME WITHOUT JULIA Roberts and Catherine Zeta-Jones, but the new sequel "Ocean's Thirteen" manages just fine.

Director Steven Soderbergh reunites with the rest of the cast of "Ocean's Eleven" and its sequel, plus Al Pacino and Ellen Barkin. This makes the undertaking still fun and entertaining, even when it falls back on the formula that made it the occasionally clever, big-budgeted heist flick franchise.

Roberts and Zeta-Jones' characters, love interests to George Clooney and Brad Pitt's sly con men, respectively, are written out, their absence easily addressed early on.

But doing away with these tandems proves beneficial in moving the characters forward. The cream-of-the-crop gang of thieves and liars reunites for a new, complicated mission soon after one of their own, Reuben (Elliot Gould), is betrayed by new casino owner Willie Bank (Pacino).

Ocean's team executes an elaborate payback scheme, refamiliarizing the viewer with each thief's expertise. They target Bank's operations, and to pull it off, they resort to teaming up with an old foe, Terry Benedict (Andy Garcia).

Matt Damon is given more to do this time around, as his character Linus gets to disguise himself, complete with a prosthetic nose. The former rookie is tasked to seduce Bank's stern assistant, Abigail (Barkin), resulting in some of the film's campier moments.

One also gets to see returning actors Pitt, Bernie Mac, Scott Caan, Casey Affleck and Don Cheadle figure in some thigh-slapping—but not really crucial—scenes.

"Ocean's Thirteen" stands on its own well enough, while piquing the neophyte viewer's curiosity about the previous films. As a sequel, it sticks to what made it enjoyable, though focus on the quirkier characters would've been great.

Story-wise, perhaps this is as far as the characters go. High-tech scamming, carefully conceived and relegated duties, even well-timed double-crosses and sneaky escapes—they're all here, but it doesn't feel repetitious. It helps that the ensemble has loads of screen charisma, even when they're just standing there, doing nothing.

Now's the time to move on and get away cleanly.

What 'Jin' likes best about 'Lost'

By Ruth L. Navarra

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

DANIEL DAE KIM

LIFE DID NOT EXACTly become a bed of roses when Daniel Dae Kim took on the role of Jin in "Lost."

"Initially, I got criticisms for my character because, in the first part of the season, Jin was portrayed as a man who was not nice, and who was mean to his wife. But that's part of the character's attraction—he is a very complex man," Kim told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive phone interview.

Asian communities abroad thought his was a stereotypical character that put Asian men in a bad light yet again. The actor got his redemption when, in one episode, Jin's life was flashed back. It showed Jin as a very devoted and loving husband who was protective of his wife.

The character, who didn't speak English, was a surprising success among American audiences.

"I think it's good for the industry to become aware that there is a market for us [Asians], not only as an audience but also as part of the show," Kim said. He went from becoming accepted to being sought after—as he was named one of People Magazine's sexiest men alive in 2005.

"I have the plaque, which I placed above my bed and stare at before I go to sleep," he jested.

What can we can look forward to in Season 3?

In the beginning of the season 3, we find some answers that we have been looking for. We realize that those we thought were our friends are not really friends.

Do the actors know what's in store for their characters?

We have a general idea, but we don't really know the specifics. I kind of like it that way.

If you were marooned on an island and you could have one "Lost" character for company, who would you pick?

Just one?

Okay, two.

I'd take Locke (Terry O'Quinn) and Sun (Yunjin Kim). Sun because you need someone from the opposite sex (laughs).

Do you have any personal theory about the island?

I used to, but all my theories were wrong, so I stopped thinking about it.

One of Jin's contributions to his fellow survivors is that he can fish. If you were on that flight as yourself, what could you offer the others?

I could be the one who organizes people.

Like Jack (Matthew Fox)?

I may see myself as someone like Jack. Hopefully, I never have to find out.

The cast members used to get together to watch the episodes. Do you still do that?

We still do whenever we can. We're on the set on different days so we don't see each other as often as before.

Who of the cast members are you closest to?

I'm pretty close to Harold Perrineau (Michael), Yunjin, Dominic Monaghan who plays Charlie and Josh Holloway who plays Sawyer.

How did you land the part?

The producers wanted a man in his 30s who could speak Korean. I grew up in the US, but I was born in Pusan.

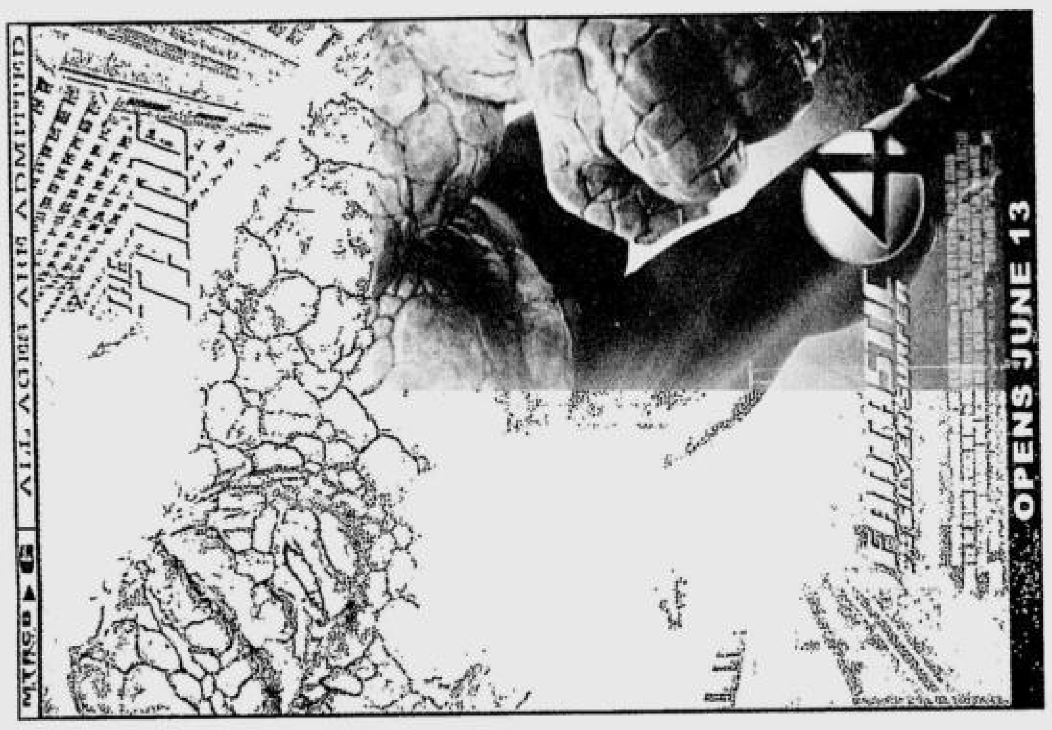
What part of Jin is your own contribution?

Jin comes from a fishing part of Korea. I lived near such a place.

What do you like best about the set?

I like the people I work with best of all. I enjoy seeing them every day. We're friends. The hardest part is losing someone because his character has to die.

The new season of "Lost" premieres tonight, 10 p.m. on AXN.



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SHOW TIME

TESSIE TOMAS AND TIMMY Cruz are the celebrity hosts of "Time and Transformation," a unique entertainment/experiential program set at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City, on Monday, June 18, starting at 7 p.m.

Through song, dance and snappy video exchanges among prominent personalities of values-based vignettes, "Time and Transformation" hopes to illustrate that changing for the better is as easy—often even enjoyable—as it is urgent.

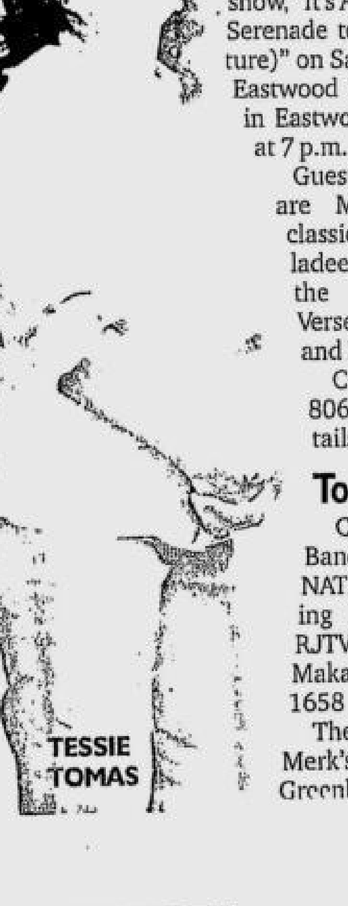
Floy Quintos directs the groundbreaking musical presentation, which will feature as main entertainers Reuben Laurente, formerly of the CompanY, and dance guru Douglas Nierras, with guests Joey Ayala and Grace Nono.

The Charity First Mime Artists and Apostolic Catholic Church Choir will present special numbers.

Other major portions will star surprise performers. A very distinguished guest is Hirdaya Mohini, one of three administrative heads of the Brahma Kumaris, the international organization mounting the event to celebrate 70 years of global service (25 in the Philippines).

Known to about a million BK students around the world as Dadi Gulzar ("Bouquet of Flowers," although her real name means "The One Who Attracts People's Hearts"), the well-loved international lecturer and spiritual leader is expected to address a 10,000 capacity crowd at the Big Dome.

"Time and Transformation" is a free concert and everyone is invited. Group reservations may be made via tel. nos. 890-7960 and/or 922-9231. Or visit www.bk-tnt.blogspot.com.


TESSIE TOMAS

'It's About Time'

Nonoy Zuñiga and Juan Rodrigo lead the celebration of World Environment Month in the country via the musical show, "It's About Time (A Serenade to Mother Nature)" on Saturday at the Eastwood Central Plaza in Eastwood City, Libis at 7 p.m.

Guest performers are Marri Nallos, classical-pop balladeer Christan, the rock band Verses, Cy Tamura and Ella Bamba.

Call (0921) 806-1080 for details.

Today

Catch A Rising Band featuring NATF and Breaking Silence at RJTV Bar, Bel-Air, Makati. Call 899-1658

The Groove at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3.

'Wowowee' suspended

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE MOVIE AND TELEVISION REVIEW and Classification Board (MTRCB) has ordered the suspension of the noontime game show "Wowowee" for violation of its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The controversial show on the Kapamilya network will be suspended for three episodes, according to an MTRCB decision signed by a three-member adjudication committee on June 5.

"Considering the numerous reprimands ABS-CBN has been meted in prior violations, coupled with the seriousness of the incident at hand, the committee views that [the] suspension would likely be the appropriate penalty," the decision said.

No suspension date had been set at press time. The decision was signed by adjudication committee members Mark Fabian Castrodes, Edmund Sicam and chair Paulino Cases.

Sudden exposure

The committee members referred to the May 12 episode, where artist Eda Nolan "suddenly" exposed a breast while dancing. Nolan, one of the cast members of the youth-oriented show "Gokada Go" on Studio 23, wore a tube dress for the number.

A position paper the network submitted to the Board denied any "actual exposure of the talent's breast, accidental or otherwise." It argued that "only the top portion of Nolan's flesh-colored bra was exposed."

But according to the decision, a review of the video tape of the incident showed "there was indeed indecent exposure."

ABS-CBN received another warning from the Board for "offensive remarks" made by the show's host, Willie Revillame, in the May 26 episode.

While introducing dancer Luningning during the "Pasalog" segment, Willie said "*heto na ang gamot sa malalambot*."

MTRCB chair Marissa Laguardia ordered network officials to meet with the Hearing and Adjudication Committee on June 5.

One for GMA 7

Meanwhile, sexy actress Ruffa Mae Quinto has been reprimanded anew for wearing a "skimpy" outfit on the May 27 episode of the Sunday variety show "SOP" on GMA 7.

In the memo Laguardia sent to GMA 7 on May 30, she said Quinto's "private parts were slightly shown" in a dance number.

In July 2005, GMA 7's suspended its reality show "Extra Challenge" for one episode as a response to a complaint filed by a Muslim group.

Among the reasons of the protest was Quinto, actresses Aubrey Miles and Ara Mina's "sexy tops and shorts."